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CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD.

BY

MARY PRYOR HACK,

Author of "Consecrated Women" and "Self-Surrender.

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"I HAVE been thinking much to-day of the text, 'The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me'; and though the psalmist meant it I think firstly to refer to his spiritual condition, and though we must take it so in the first place, yet we believe too that our temporal affairs and our health and all that 'concerns' us are equally under the care of Him without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground. Thus we can in confidence refer all to His loving Fatherly care."

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INTRODUCTION.

WE have sought, in the present volume, to gather up fragments of teaching from some comparatively unknown lives, and from others well known and often portrayed.

We venture to hope that many will find help and cheer in thus being brought into contact with others who have passed safely through some of the hard conflicts and deep joys of life.

We are very conscious of the great difficulty of presenting a truthful picture, which shows forth in just proportions the defects and excellencies of any life. This difficulty arises from various causes. It may so easily happen that while the process of preparation for a life of full surrender is sometimes slow and difficult, those who see, in later years, the temper and words under full control, and a condition of calm trust attained, forget the earlier struggles of their friend; or if life is prolonged, new friends gather round who never knew, and can scarcely believe, that one so holy ever had sins and failure to deplore.

On the other hand, to bring out in strong colouring defects in natural character and judgment and temper, unless we can also represent the amount of victory

which grace *has* given over besetting sins and weaknesses, is hardly fair.

Many are watching for the failings of Christians,—and the fretful tone, the quick word, the look of annoyance, are set down as proofs that the "overcoming power" is a myth, and that those who profess no dependence on Divine help get on just as well. Could those who observe the failures and the sins, always see the repentance and the suffering endured by those who are conscious of having brought dishonour upon the cause they love, they would feel differently.

We heard lately a story bearing on this subject. A Christian man often visited at the house of an unbeliever who had married his sister. The sister fondly hoped that her brother's influence would be blessed to her husband. One day, under strong provocation, the brother left the house in anger. The husband accepted this action as a fresh proof that Christianity was a lie. Early next morning the Christian man came, after a night of sleepless distress, to ask forgiveness for his fault. The unbeliever was melted; he saw the reality of a religion which could thus humble a strong man, and he too was led to become a follower of the Redeemer.

It seems as if Satan thought it doubly worth while to tempt in every possible way those who profess to have turned their backs on his kingdom, while previously, it may be, he lulled the conscience with syren songs.

Not that this is any excuse for Christians, who have such abundant provision for their protection; but it is

only by degrees in many cases that they fully apprehend their glorious calling and position.

We are able in the following sketches in some instances to give an idea of the failures and struggles which were passed through before the full surrender of the will was made. In other cases we have no record of the early groping after light and truth and victory, but only of the results as seen afterwards by those around.

Not that we believe a process of struggle and failure to be inevitable before the will is brought into harmony with the Divine will, for there are some who seem, even in childhood, to drink into the spirit of the lowly Saviour, and to be irresistibly attracted by His beauty and loveliness, so that it is their delight to follow always where He leads.

While Christians bitterly deplore the sins of the Church, and many weep over their own individual sins, most of them can surely acknowledge that they have known some followers of Christ who have lived in such close communion with their Lord that the overcoming grace has been largely bestowed upon them. The faith of men and women who have been permitted to see such consistent lives, is strengthened thereby, and they are able to accept as truthful the records of lives wholly given up to Christ. Well is it if they are also stimulated to reach after the same grace which made those others what they were.

Are there not many Christian women who, in the midst of daily cares and burdens, are counting the weari-

ness and the sufferings of this mortal life less painful than the consciousness that they are dishonouring their God and Saviour by failure in thought and word and deed. If some of these shall lift up their heads in hope through seeing that other women similarly tried and tempted have, by faith in their unconquered Captain, been brought out into "a large place" of blessing and of victory, this little volume will not have been sent forth in vain.

"A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH."

MARY FLETCHER.

It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
My Jesus, Saviour; yet this soul of mine
Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
Know more and more.

MARY SHEKLETON.

"*March 19th*, 1841.—I firmly believe that upon my use of this bitter anguish depends under God the very cast of my future life."
—*Bishop Samuel Wilberforce.*

I.

MARY FLETCHER.[1]

BORN, 1739. DIED, 1815.

MARY BOSANQUET was born at Leytonstone, Essex, September, 1739. From her very early years she felt the Holy Spirit striving with her and offering her salvation. One day, when only four years old, a circumstance occurred which led her to realize that God hears prayer, and very often the remembrance of it gave her comfort, she tells us, "in times of trial and danger." She was an exceedingly timid child, and this trait in her character caused her much suffering. Although backward in reading, passages of Scripture which she had heard, frequently occurred to her mind, and the enquiry arose in her heart whether she really did as the Bible said, and she came to the conclusion that if the Bible meant what it said, she and all about her were wrong. She saw plainly, child as she was, the discrepancies between the precepts of the Bible and the daily walk of most of those who profess the Name of Christ. She did not get much spiritual help from those about her, and when some Scriptural command was pressing upon her heart, and she asked questions about it, she was

[1] This sketch is mainly compiled from "The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher. By Henry Moore. Wesleyan Conference Office." By kind permission.

told that those parts of Scripture which inculcated great strictness of life were liable to be misunderstood, and did not really mean what she imagined. Her convictions were by these means often quenched. She writes herself:—

"I now drew the following reflections: If the Bible does not mean all it seems to speak, with regard to the commands of God, certainly the same allowance may be made for its threatenings; so that I began to believe that there was no hell at all, or at least not half so terrible as I had been taught to think. This thought raised in me a dislike to the Word of God, and great coldness and carelessness throughout all my conduct. But my adorable Lord did not give me up to the hardness of my heart, but still followed me with His drawings. Often I thought, perhaps the Bible really does mean what it says, and then I am not a Christian; and greatly did I wish to know what was the truth. My sister, who was nearly five years older than I, was also under a concern for her soul: she wished to know and do the will of God."

When Mary was about seven years old, there came to live in the family a servant who had been among the people who were then styled Methodists, and through their instrumentality, blessed by the Holy Spirit, she had come to some knowledge of experimental religion. Her words were eagerly received by the two children; indeed upon Mary's mind they made an indelible impression. The doctrine of salvation by faith was a great stumbling-block to the reasoning mind of the child. She thought it would be easier to be a martyr than to believe. Musing one day on the thought, "What can it be to know my sins forgiven and to have faith in Jesus?" Mary's heart rose in rebellion against God for

having made a way of salvation so hard to be understood. She enumerated many things she could do or give up, to obtain salvation, but how to believe she did not know. Surely her cry of distress was in reality a prayer, and it was heard and answered. Suddenly the words were sent into her heart with Divine power and light,

> "Who on Jesus relies, without money or price,
> The pearl of forgiveness and holiness buys."

And in a moment she was enabled joyfully to lay hold of the hope set before us in the Gospel. Although the brightness of her feelings faded, after a while, she seems to have retained her faith henceforth, for when fears concerning the day of judgment assailed her, she used to comfort herself with the thought, "Jesus is to be my Judge, and I cannot be afraid of Jesus." After this, cruel temptations assailed the poor child, and it was suggested to her that she had "blasphemed against the Holy Ghost." Her distress of mind was so great that it affected her temper, and she was accused of obstinacy. After bearing the trial alone for nine weeks she mentioned it to her sister, who exclaimed, "Why, you do not *mean* to blaspheme, do you?" The difference between wilful and unintentional sin was in that moment clearly brought before her mind. The simplicity of the child comes out in her description of her after experience. "I then recollected that I had heard something about temptation, and often wondered what it was. I thought, it may be Satan whispers this into my mind, like what we read of Pilgrim going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I then determined never to regard it more, but always answer with these words, 'I do not mean to blaspheme; I will acknow-

ledge Christ for ever;' and in a few days I was perfectly delivered." She adds, "This circumstance was a warning to me ever since, not to be too severe in passing a judgment on the actions of children, whose reflections are far deeper, and their feelings much keener than we are apt to imagine."

Mary was now about ten. She found much comfort from reading the Bible, and nearly every time she opened it she found some passage specially suited to her need, particularly in the prophet Isaiah. One day, however, she heard some one say that it was presumption on the part of those who applied to themselves words addressed originally to the Jews or to the Gentiles or to the Church collectively. These unadvised words chilled the little girl, and her relish for the Scriptures was gone.

After a time, the family visited Bath, and Mary entered into the fascinations of the ball-room; but even here she had longings after God, and she thought if she only could find the Methodists, or some one who would tell her how to please Him, she would gladly turn away from these gay scenes.

A year later Mary and her sister learned that Mrs. Lefevre, whom they frequently visited, had been awakened to the interests of her soul, and from this time they often met with religious people at her house. This was a great pleasure; but their longing after spiritual help made them impatient of their new friends, and they remarked, "These Methodists do not quite answer our expectations. Though our time is short with them, they lose much of it before they begin to converse with us about our souls; the Apostles would not have done so."

Mary was now much drawn out in prayer after holiness, till again discouraged by the remark that "sin

could not be entirely removed from the heart." She writes of this check: "I felt as if cold water was thrown on a newly kindled fire, and the wings of my faith seemed clipt. Fearing lest I was wrong, I prayed the Lord to answer for Himself by His word. So taking up the Bible with much prayer I opened it, and immediately cast my eyes on these words, 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is anything too hard for Me?' It came with power; my heart as it were leaped for joy; and I cried out, 'Now I will wrestle and will prevail.'"

Towards the end of the winter following this experience, Mary was confirmed, and for some months after had a special sense of the Lord's presence when she partook of the Sacramental bread and wine. Again, however, came a time of "wandering after many things"; and though tasting now and then a little of the Lord's goodness, yet she was much under the power of her own will. She describes herself as "giving way to an insolent and disobedient spirit in such a degree towards the whole family, that the recollection often seemed to draw blood from her heart."

After this, like many others she had to learn that she must lean upon the Lord in naked faith irrespective of feeling, and that not only by the sensible experiences of His presence was her soul to be kept in life and victory. She writes: "But the Lord did not forsake me. One night, after spending some time in prayer, I cast my eyes on a book and read these words:—

> "'I'll look into my Saviour's breast:
> Away, sad doubt, and anxious care,—
> Mercy is all that's written there.
> Jesu's blood through earth and skies,
> Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.'

I saw, as it were, the Father of mercies opening His arms to receive me; and on that boundless love I had liberty to cast my whole soul."

After the marriage of her sister, Mary was left in much loneliness regarding her spiritual course. Although she had been confirmed, she felt that she had not confessed Christ in her own family. She saw that it was not right for her to go to the theatre, and yet the prospect of being in opposition to her father was very painful to her. She says, "I consulted some of my serious friends about the play-house; but they said, 'Were you older we should know what to advise; but as you are but sixteen, if your parents insist on your going, we do not see how you can avoid it.' This answer did not fully satisfy me, and I was much distressed both ways. I saw the duty I owed to an absolute command from my parents, in a very strong light; and on the other hand, I remembered that my obedience to them was to be 'in the Lord.' I sought direction in prayer, and endeavoured to examine the question on both sides; but the more I searched the clearer it appeared to me I must not comply. I considered the play-house had a tendency to weaken every Christian temper, and to strengthen all that was contrary; to represent vice under the false colour of virtue; and to lead, in every respect, into the spirit of the world, 'the friendship of which,' the Apostle declares, 'is enmity with God.' When the time came, and obedient compliance was required, I begged to be left at home. On a refusal, I laid open my whole heart to my father; apprising him, I would not willingly be disobedient in anything, unless where conscience made it appear to be my duty. We conversed on the subject with great freedom; for my dear father was a man of deep reason, calmness, and consideration. He replied,

'Child, your arguments prove too much; and, therefore, are not conclusive. If what you say be true, then all places of diversion, all dress and company, nay, the whole spirit of the world is sinful.' I embraced the opportunity, and said, 'Sir, I see it as such, and therefore am determined no more to be conformed to its customs, fashions, or maxims.' This was a season of great trial; but the Lord stood by me: glory be to His holy Name!"

She was now debarred for a time from visiting Mrs. Lefevre; but as her desire was to be wholly conformed to her Lord's will, this trial was sanctified to her by drawing her dependence away from man. She felt that she had leaned too much upon this beloved friend. On being allowed again to visit her, Mary told her that she believed she could now give her up to the will of God. Mrs. Lefevre, who was then in feeble health, was rejoiced to hear this, saying that her only anxiety in the prospect of death, had been the thought of leaving her who had so many trials. A few days after, she was called away from earth, and Mary Bosanquet was supported by heavenly consolations.

The following little incident, described by herself, illustrates some of the difficulties through which she had to make her way at this time. One day, when she was about seventeen, she accompanied her father and brothers and some others to see the *Royal George*. She probably knew that she was going into an atmosphere little in harmony with her state of mind, and it was a trial to her to go. Her troubles began while in the boat on the way to the vessel.

She writes: "Some of the company began to ridicule my overmuch religion. When we drew near the *Royal George*, the men said, we must not attempt to go

round her, for she was deep and very dangerous; but the gentlemen insisted they should row round the ship. While this was doing we were in great danger; and the ladies, exceedingly alarmed, began to cry out. Some of them said, 'Miss Bosanquet, why are you so calm?' I told them I saw no danger, but our business was to trust in God: I was quite ready either to sink or to be saved. My confidence in the Lord kept me secure in His Providence. I had now an opportunity to speak, and they were ready to hear. When we got into the ship, it seemed like a town; such a vast variety of places like shops were all around. We were met by Captain Burnet, who led us into a grand room: the place designed for us was pointed out by a lady that attended us. Captain Burnet proposed a dance, and after that a cold collation. Now I felt troubled indeed. Several of the company fell upon me with, 'Now, Miss Bosanquet, what will you do now? You must dance, you cannot run away.' Knowing my help must come from above, I lifted up my heart to the Lord, and cried to Him for help. Presently a messenger in haste called for Captain Burnet. He ran down, but soon returned with great disappointment in his countenance, saying 'Oh, what shall we do? The Prince of Wales and Admiral Anson are coming on board.' Never was anything more welcome to me than this hurry in preparing for the Prince—our present King. My heart praised the Lord for this timely interposition. The cannon put aside the dance, and we at length talked of returning. We were let down into our little vessel, and I was truly thankful to be on the way home. But another trial soon occurred. Some of the company proposed going to Vauxhall; this I refused. Then said they, 'You must stay in the vessel with the men.' I knew not what to do. As they drew near the port

where our coaches were waiting for us, a strange disagreement took place between two of the gentlemen; one of them, my brother, rose up and bade the man draw near to the steps; he got out and I followed him. The rest went on to Vauxhall. I was truly thankful when we got into the coach. This was the last attempt of the kind."

In the summer of 1757, Mary Bosanquet's parents went to Scarborough, and Mrs. Bosanquet offered to take her daughter with them "if she would do as they did, and not bring a reproach on them in a strange place." On her declining to give such a promise, she was left under the care of an uncle in London, where she was allowed to do very much as she liked. "I had never before," she writes, "had the opportunity of a constant attendance on the means of grace; and one of my acquaintance being imprudent, pressed me never to be absent from any meeting or preaching. By this means I am sensible I went too far. I walked about more than my strength would bear, having been scarcely ever permitted to go out of our own grounds but in a carriage. But, above all, I am pained when I think how little of Christian prudence appeared in my conduct. The kind family in which I was received could not but blame and condemn a course of conduct which, though the motive was upright, was in itself wrong."

The consequence of this overstrain of body and mind was a low nervous fever with much depression, which was laid to the account of her religion.

It was at this time that her Lord arose for her help in a remarkable manner, and so powerful was the sense of His nearness and that the word was a message from Him, that the remembrance and influence of the experience remained with her during life.

As she lay one day brooding over her condition, and weeping over her darkness and depression, she realized an unusual brightness, and the words powerfully arrested her attention, penetrating "every faculty of her soul and body," "Thou shalt walk with Me in white." The query seemed to arise spontaneously "Lord, how can that be, seeing I am not worthy?" The answer was given, "I will make thee worthy; I will thoroughly purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin;

> "Glory is on earth begun,
> Everlasting life is won."

The time had now arrived when Mary Bosanquet was to leave her father's house. She was twenty-one, and possessed of a small fortune. One day her father said to her: "There is a particular promise which I require of you; that is that you will never, on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make either of your brothers what you call a Christian." On her replying, "I think, Sir, I dare not consent to that;" he added, "Then you force me to put you out of my house." Her reply was, "Yes, Sir, according to your view of things I acknowledge it; and if I may but have your approval, no situation will be disagreeable." Her father remarked, that there were many things in her present situation which must be very uncomfortable to her; which she acknowledged, adding, that if he would say that he approved of her removing, she would take a lodging directly, but that no suffering should induce her to leave him except by his free consent. He replied with some emotion: "I do not know that you have ever disobeyed me except in these fancies; and my children shall always have a home in my house."

Mary Bosanquet thought it best to provide herself with a lodging and a servant girl, against any sudden occasion for removing: and on informing her mother of what she had done, Mrs. Bosanquet gave her two beds, and appeared to approve of her plan. But Mary could not take the decisive step of her own accord. For two months she was torn by conflicting feelings. At last, one day her mother sent her word that she must go to her lodgings that night. She went down to dinner but as nothing was said on the subject she still waited. The next day the same message was sent to her, and on her father and mother going out, her mother told Mary that after setting them down the coach should return to take her to her lodgings. Her father added that they should be glad to see her to dine on the following Tuesday. This was a little solace to her distressed mind, for she had so dreaded lest she should not be invited to visit her parents. The servants stood in a row weeping as their young mistress took leave of them, and thus she passed from under the parental roof.

We hardly know towards whom to allow our sympathies to flow the more freely—the parents, who could not understand how their daughter's convictions could lead her into such a strange and separate path; or the daughter, who was tearing herself from those who were bound to her by such sacred ties. However, this partial separation seems to have resulted in drawing closer the bonds of affection.

Very forlorn and very cold were the two rooms which Mary Bosanquet and her young maid entered that evening. But on looking up to her Lord, a "sweet calm" overspread her mind, and as she sat down to her meal of "bread and rank salt butter," she could say, "I ate my meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

At first it felt alarming, to one brought up in rather high life and hedged in by social barriers, to be in a position of so much independence. But realizing for whose sake she had left the shelter of home and relatives, she felt that she could be preserved on the right hand and on the left, by keeping close to her Guide, and in Him she was able to trust.

Though so upheld by Divine strength, the visits to her parents were marred by the pain of the parting. Their kindness, too, in sending her additional comforts, touched her deeply and "made her wounds bleed afresh."

She now threw in her lot with the Wesleyan community, giving up her whole time to religious exercises, and allowing herself few even of the necessaries of life. To old age she continued to spend as little as possible on her own attire, that she might give freely to those in need. We can hardly call it self-denial, because it was her delight to help others even at the expense of her own personal comfort.

In the year 1762 she felt the inhabitants of her native village much laid upon her heart. and a house of her own becoming vacant, she resolved to move to Leytonstone.

Her parents now allowed her to be often with them; but she feared lest it should not be so agreeable to them to have her within a mile of their house, on account of the preachers who would make a station there. She therefore told her father frankly of her intention, and the cause of her desire to reside there. He made no objection, only saying with a smile, "If a mob should pull your house about your ears I cannot hinder them."

In 1763 Mary Bosanquet removed to Leytonstone She soon established a religious meeting on Thursday

evenings, and obtained, on the Sunday, the assistance of one of Mr. Wesley's preachers. Within a fortnight, she had drawn together a sort of class, called by the Wesleyans a religious society, consisting of twenty-five persons.

It was a lone house, and they were at first exposed to disturbance and insult from the mob; but they never met with any serious alarm.

The education of children was the next object which occupied her attention. She decided to take none but destitute orphans, that she might have them completely under her own control; and it was not long before six suitable children were taken into the house "in the Name of the Lord." Some pious women, also, were added to the household, who had each her duties and employments. Mary Bosanquet's model appears to have been, the Orphanage at Halle in Germany, established by Professor Francke. In all, she received about seventy children and grown persons, but not all at one time. As most of the children were destitute and very dirty, and often in miserable health, the first care of Mary Bosanquet and her helpers was to attend to their bodily needs. Then their minds and hands were carefully trained, and as they became old enough, the children were prepared for service or trades. Many of the adults were aged or invalids, and required much attention. But above all, the welfare of the souls of all the inmates rested heavily on the heart of their adopted mother, and it was a great joy to her when without any very apparent cause, an awakening became manifest among the children.

In the year 1766 Mary Bosanquet lost both parents; they had previously become reconciled to their daughter, and assured of the purity of her intentions. "My

father," she tells us, "had a long and painful illness of three years. I was now permitted to be a good deal with them. Immediately after the death of my father, my dear mother entered into her last illness. She expressed a tender kindness towards me during her illness, and showed her thoughtful care by augmenting the sum my father had left me."

In the summer of 1768 Mary Bosanquet decided to remove with her large family (now thirty in number) to Guildersome in Yorkshire. Probably the cheapness of living in Yorkshire was the principal reason for making this change of residence, also she hoped the more bracing air might benefit the failing health of a beloved friend and companion, Mrs. Ryan, who was also matron of the home. But she only survived their arrival at their new abode about two months.

Mrs. Ryan had been a most efficient manager of domestic affairs, thus setting Mary Bosanquet at liberty for the superintendence of the training of the children and for the promotion of the spiritual work. Now she had to take the supervision of the entire household, and she was often oppressed by perplexities and domestic burdens. She tells us that letters came from many parts, some pitying, some upbraiding her; and informing her at the same time that all the stories which they heard carried about concerning her, came from members of her own family. It required the utmost patience and forbearance to meet these trials calmly. But they were borne, as part of the appointed discipline, to God's glory. Many of these reports were gossiping accounts of her failures, while adapting herself to the new work of providing for the material wants of her family.

She was now advised to buy a small farm and malt-

kiln. She also built a house on this estate. For a time the farm promised fair and the malt-kiln answered very well. A sphere of usefulness opened in the neighbourhood. The Wednesday evening meetings were well attended, and at length grew so large, for the people came from miles around, that it became necessary to advise those who were able, to gather similar meetings near their own homes. This plan answered well. Those "infant meetings" were visited occasionally, and prospered as well as the original meetings.

In her loneliness, and oppressed with care, the thought sometimes occurred to Mary Bosanquet that perhaps the Lord would draw her out of all this by marriage. Many times she was solicited to marry, but each time an offer was made to her, "a clear light seemed to shine on her mind, with the voice, 'You will neither be holier nor happier with this man.'"

The cares of the Church rested heavily upon her. Some enthusiasm seemed creeping in, and Mary Bosanquet deemed this dangerous, as the numbers were increasing. In order to have help in dealing with the new converts, she asked the old members to meet her, that they might renew their covenant together. She was very thoughtful in the prospect of this meeting. She felt herself as a weak child, and looked upon some of her fellow-members as much beyond her in spiritual growth. Surely this sense of weakness was a preparation for the service. In reference to it, with a true knowledge of human nature, she says that she felt it was "one of the most delicate subjects in the world, and required both wisdom and much love to extinguish false fire and to keep up the true."

Sometimes she took short missionary journeys into the towns and villages round, when her labours were

varied and by no means light. One Sabbath morning in 1777 she rode twenty miles on horseback and addressed a concourse of people out on the Yorkshire moors. So great was the impression made that they pressed her to come again. On the way, she and her companions passed through Huddersfield, and a friend begged her to have a meeting there on her return. On her way back in the evening, a minister told her that there were some who did not like women to speak among them. Looking to the Lord for guidance, she seemed to receive this direction, "If I have a word to speak from Him He will make my way; if not, the door will be shut; I am only to show the meekness of wisdom, and leave all to God."

At Huddersfield, Mary Bosanquet told the friends assembled of what she had heard, and found that the prejudice existed to some extent. At the same time they said that the meeting had been announced, and great disappointment would be felt if it were not held. The room was crowded, and the heat so great that on the hymn being given out many fainted. As there was a large concourse outside, it was resolved to continue the meeting out of doors. Exhausted by the heat, Mary Bosanquet was borne along by the crowd, hardly knowing whither she went. On arriving at a horse-block the people stopped, and she stood on the steps to address them. She thus tells of her experience:

"I gave out,—

"'Come ye sinners, poor and needy, etc.'

While the people were singing the hymn I felt a renewed conviction to speak in the name of the Lord. My bodily strength seemed to return each moment. I felt no weariness, and my voice was stronger than in the morn-

ing, while I was led to enlarge on the words, 'the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us.' I felt great enlargement while endeavouring to show the purity of our Judge, Whose eyes could endure no iniquity. That as a Lawgiver He was just and holy, and that the thing gone out of His lips must stand, 'The soul that sinneth shall die.' But the Lord is also our King, and He will save us. 1. By convincing us of the purity of His law, and the justness of our punishment who have broken it. 2. By making us tremble before that Judge Whose eyes are as a flame of fire. 3. By leading us to Him who is our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, Who now manifests Himself to the soul as the propitiation for our sins. And, 4. As a King He goes on in the believer, conquering and to conquer, till the eternal reign of Jesus commences in the soul, which, as the morning light, grows brighter and brighter, into the perfect day, till the perfect 'love which casteth out all fear' makes the soul as the abode and 'habitation of God through the Spirit.'

"Deep solemnity sat on every face. I think there was scarce a cough to be heard, or the least motion, though the number gathered was very great. So solemn a time I have seldom known; my voice was clear enough to reach them all; and when we concluded I felt stronger than when we began. They then desired me to speak to each of the women joined in the society, which took me till near ten. The room we went into for that purpose had a damp stone floor, so that I could hardly move my legs when I came out; but they kindled a fire, and after getting some refreshment I grew better. About twelve I went to bed, and rested under the shadow of the Almighty till morning, when I found myself remarkably well. After having breakfasted with

brother Goldthorp, where we had a lively conversation concerning holiness, I came home with much thankfulness and peace."

Her feeling with regard to the path in which she had to walk is well described in the following passage:—

"I have been led to reflect on the difficulties of the path I am called in. I know the power of God, which I felt when standing on the horse-block in the street at Huddersfield; but at the same time I am conscious how ridiculous I must appear in the eyes of many for so doing. Therefore, if some persons consider me as an impudent woman, and represent me as such, I cannot blame them. Again, many say, 'If you are called to preach, why do you not do it constantly, and take a round as a preacher?' I answer, 'Because that is not my call. I have many duties to attend to, and many cares which they know nothing about. I must therefore leave myself to His guidance, Who hath the sole right of disposing of me.' Again, they say, 'Why do you not give out I am to preach? Why call it a meeting?' I answer, 'Because that suits my design best. First, it is less ostentatious. Secondly, it leaves me at liberty to speak, more or less, as I feel myself led. Thirdly, it gives less offence to those who watch for it. . . . I do nothing but what Mr. Wesley approves; and as to reproach thrown by some on me, what have I to do with it, but quietly go forward. . . . For none but Thee, my Lord, would I take up this sore cross. But Thou hast done more for me; Oh, do Thy own will upon me in all things! Only make me what Thou wouldest have me to be. Only make me holy, and then lead me as Thou wilt."

We have an interesting account from Mary Bosanquet's pen, of the conversion of a young orphan girl,

who became her beloved friend and helper in after years. She writes:—

"*Oct. 28th, 1777.*—Glory be to God, He is working among us! Last week Sally Lawrence was set at liberty, and the change is very evident. Yesterday she said, 'Oh! had I known what the love of God was, sure I should never have rested so long without it! I have often found great joy, but there was always a sting in the end. Some thought or other would come and take away the pleasure; but now I find a pleasure in God without any sting. Last week I felt a change, and many promises; but I had not a clear evidence. However, as you were saying in the class last Tuesday, that we ought to rejoice "evermore," and that the way so to do was to praise the Lord for what He had done; I thought, "Then I will try to do so." Accordingly, I spoke more freely than I should otherwise have done, and while I spoke I found more power to believe; but on Friday, while you were meeting the children, I found my evidence quite clear. These words were applied to my mind, "There is now no condemnation," etc., and since that time I have been very happy. I never knew such a week as this in all my life. I used to be tired, and I hated the washing week; but I have now been kept in entire peace all through.'"

The concluding words are full of encouragement. When religion thus influences heart and hands in the midst of the more homely duties it seems such a reality. We do not doubt that Sally Lawrence, with heart and mind at rest, was able to do the washing better than ever before.

Mary Bosanquet felt that her settlement in Yorkshire "was good for the work of God, good for her own soul; but for a season it did not seem good for her temporal

affairs." Bad debts connected with the malt-kilns, and the misconduct of the manager of the farm were among her most serious difficulties. On account of these pecuniary trials Mary Bosanquet lessened her family, by placing some of the older children in service, or apprenticing them to trades.

Some proposed to her to break up the establishment; but this she was not prepared to do until some provision should present for the aged and those who had found a home with her during many years. When her distress was at its height, a gentleman, who had long taken an interest in her affairs, offered her "his hand, his heart, and his purse." Happily, she had too much Christian and womanly feeling, and too much sense of honour, to accept this offer, unable as she was to give him her deepest affections. But to wound one so interested for her welfare could not but give her suffering. She thus writes of him:—

"His affections were strong, sincere, and constant; his offers generous, and his sentiments tender. He loved my family; and whoever was kind to me found favour in his eyes. This could not but operate on my gratitude. I was deeply pained. But I could not see him the man my highest reason chose to obey. First, I did not so honour the light he had in religion, as to believe it my privilege to be led thereby. Secondly, though he was a good man, and helpful to people in every respect, yet he did not see the narrow path of walking close with God, as I could wish the man I took for a husband to do. Thirdly, though I had a grateful love towards him, I could not find that satisfying affection which flows from perfect confidence, *and which is the very spirit and soul of marriage.* I felt, however, in the keenest manner, the need I had of his assistance in my affairs;

but I thought it ungenerous, to the last degree, to accept help and counsel from one whose growing affection I was too sensible of, but to which, however, I could make no return. I used the plainest terms in assuring him of the impossibility of our affection ever becoming reciprocal, and proposed the breaking off of all acquaintance. He alleged in answer, 'You cannot do without me; you will be ruined. God hath made me your helper, and if you cannot see or feel as I do, we will be only common friends. I will say no more on a subject so disagreeable to you.'"

Three years later she was still more deeply involved in pecuniary troubles, owing to the failure of her former agent, whom she had put into the farm as tenant, but whose debts she found herself in honour bound to discharge, to the amount of six hundred pounds. Her friend now offered to lend the sum on interest, and to become a partner with her in the farm and kilns, so as to take the management of all. "Here," she says, "I was quite at a loss. I was almost ready to say, 'Darkness hath covered my path'! Prudence, delicacy, every lively sentiment started back at the thought. What! come under such an obligation to the man I am constantly refusing? But there was no alternative; I must accept his help or be ruined. I therefore followed what appeared to be the leading of Providence."

Having made the arrangement, she went for some months to Bath, Bristol, etc. She seemed to have a promise given her, before leaving home, that no one should lose anything by her, and on her return she was enabled to pay Mr. —— and other creditors the full interest of the money taken up. But she was still quite unprepared to pay off any of the borrowed capital, and this brought her into much anxiety and distress.

We should like to see in all who profess to be actuated by Christian principle the same fear of debt as Mary Bosanquet entertained, and the same honourable determination to do everything possible to meet all liabilities, especially in paying the interest on borrowed capital. Few things bring religion into greater disrepute than laxity in these matters.

Her brother would not allow her to sell her estate at Leytonstone at that time, but she still determined to part with Cross Hall, and use the proceeds towards paying the debt—further lessening it out of her income.

She thus continues the narrative of her conflicts :—

"I then proposed to myself to keep only twenty pounds per year. Nay, I thought, how can I have a right even to twenty? Justice is before mercy. They [that is the other members of her household] must shift for themselves, and I will do the same. I may, perhaps, find some little business by which life may be sustained, till my affairs take a favourable turn. It is true nobody calls in their money, nor seems to have a fear concerning it; yet it is my duty to take the more care for them, because of their confidence in me. It may be supposed, as I was daily striving to part with the place, and expecting to turn out, that my thoughts frequently were occupied on what way of life I should choose as most conducive to the glory of God; and during this season the Lord did teach me many lessons of poverty and resignation. It seemed to me no manner of life could be disagreeable if I had but a prospect of having no debts.

"One day, as I was standing at a window, musing on this subject, I saw a poor man driving some asses laden with sand, by which he gained his bread. As I looked on him a spring of satisfaction ran through my mind,

and I thought, I am perfectly willing to take up the business of that man. If I preserve unsold one of the freehold cottages, the asses might graze on the common, and I could follow them with something to sell. There were few trades which my conscience would suffer me to follow; and my abilities were equal to still fewer. But to anything in the whole world would I turn that was not sinful rather than remain in debt. I do not mean that I decided to act thus, but so conformed was my mind to poverty at this time, that the thought of even that employment, as it now glanced through it, gave me real pleasure. However open I had been with my relations concerning my affairs hitherto, I determined to conceal all personal wants; for if I voluntarily gave up my income for the payment of my debts, I did not see it to be just to live on theirs; and this would not have been difficult as I had no relation that lived within two hundred miles. During this suspense, conversing one day with my friend Mr. ——, he said: 'Indeed I am at a loss what to do for you. I wish I had suffered you to advertise and sell the farm six years ago. It is now too late. The nation is engaged in wars; you would now sell it for a trifle. You are ruined, madam! You withstand the order of God. My fortune is enough for you and me. But you cannot see it in that light. May the Lord stand by you! But I cannot think of a partnership any longer, the blame would fall on me.'

"It was now the summer of 1781. I had all along the impression that about that season something would open. One day as I was walking up a narrow lane which had a stile at the top, I saw a flock of sheep before me. The shepherd had hard work to drive them on; they seemed determined to turn again. I thought, well they may, for there is no gate, no way through;

what can he wish them to do; he forced them along, however, with dogs and sticks. I said in my mind these sheep are like me, driven on in a narrow path without any way to get out. I followed at a distance, expecting every moment they would turn back upon me, when all at once they began to run, and I discovered a newly made gate into a spacious field of turnips. In a minute they were dispersed, and fell to their full pasture. Faith whispered to my heart, so shall a door open before you in the appointed time."

The following extract from her diary was written in August, 1780:—

"O Lord how peculiar are Thy ways with me! What wouldest Thou have me to do? Here I am; command what Thou wilt. Bring me to a state of poverty, reproach, a workhouse, or what Thou wilt, only let me not mistake my way. It is true I have more than I owe, and as yet an income for life, enough for myself. But I cannot support these expenses and losses. And yet it seems I cannot get deliverance from them. Every answer to prayer is only, 'Stand still, and see My salvation.' Lord I am ready to do so; but all cry out, 'It is madness not to do something.' And yet, Thou seemest to frustrate all I attempt."

Mary Bosanquet's history becomes now interwoven with that of one whose holy life is well worthy of our closest observation.

Jean Guillaume de la Flechère (or Fletcher as the name came to be Anglicised), was born at Nyon in Switzerland, September, 1729. He was a clever lad and highly educated, and was looking to enter the military profession, but disappointed in this, he came to England as a tutor. There he was aroused, by a servant in the Christian family in which he resided, to think about the

interests of his soul. Further he became acquainted with John Wesley and other devoted Christians. The result was an intense craving after salvation and sanctification. The mental conflict through which he passed was severe, and then he entered into rest of soul, through faith in the Lord Jesus. All that he had experienced prepared him to enter into sympathy with others passing through similar distress. Long before he was ordained as a minister, he began to speak to others about their souls, and he seized every opportunity to direct them to that Saviour who was now his "all in all." His biographer thus writes of this early period of his ministry :—

"Though he was at present by no means perfect in the English tongue, particularly in the pronunciation of it, yet the earnestness with which he spoke, then seldom to be found in English preaching, and the unspeakably tender affection to poor, undone sinners, which breathed in every word and question, drew multitudes of people to hear him, and few went empty away."

Among others, Mary Bosanquet, in the early days of her Christian course, went to hear the young foreigner, and was introduced to him.

The preaching of such a man was likely to attract a young woman with similar aspirations after a life of consecration and devotedness to the service of Christ. In after years both confessed to have felt at this time "the secret influence of a mutual attachment," but they became parted by circumstances and no intimate intercourse subsisted between them for many years. "They knew, however, and rejoiced in each others labours; but while every succeeding report tended to increase their mutual regard, they endeavoured to turn the whole stream of their affections towards heavenly things, joyfully sacri-

ficing every inferior consideration to the interest of the Church and glory of their common Master."

Mary Bosanquet was made willing to devote herself to God in a single life. "Only," she writes, "I sometimes thought, were I to be married to Mr. Fletcher, would he not be rather a help than a hindrance to my soul? But it was only a thought."

"It is sometimes presented to my mind," she said on one occasion to her confidential friend Mrs. Ryan, "that I should be called to marry Mr. Fletcher." The wise reply was given: "I like him best of any man, if ever you do take that step. But unless he should be of a very tender disposition towards you, you would not be happy; but God will direct you."

Although she did not encourage the secret attraction towards this saintly man, yet she had experienced it, and no doubt felt that in holiness of life and devotion to Christ, as well as in refinement and education, he met the needs of her entire being.

Such being the case we need not wonder that all other suitors who desired her hand were rejected.

After her refusal of her generous benefactor, Mr. ———, the thought recurred to her mind "Perhaps Mr. Fletcher is to be my deliverer." She started back from the idea "lest it should be a stratagem of Satan." She had not at that time either seen or heard of him for fifteen years.

"In August, 1777," she states, "on going into the house of a friend who was just come from the conference, he said, 'Do you know that Mr. Fletcher of Madeley,[1] is dying? Indeed, I know not but he is dead. If he hold

[1] Fletcher went to Madeley in 1759, remaining there till his death in 1785.

out a little longer, he is to go abroad; but it is a pity, for he will die by the way, being in the last stage of consumption.'" Mary Fletcher adds, "For some days I constantly offered him up to the will of God. A few days after, another of my acquaintances wrote: 'Mr Fletcher spits blood, and perspires profusely every night. Some have great hope that prayer will raise him up; but I believe he is a dying man.' As I was one day in prayer, these words passed through my mind,: 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' I said, 'Lord, I dare not ask it; I leave to Thy sacred will: Thy will be done.'"

The thought occurred to her, that if Mr. Fletcher were restored to health, and were to make a proposal of marriage to her, she could not doubt its being of God, after such an answer to prayer. She adds: "Yet fearing a deception, I cried to the Lord to keep me in His narrow way, whatever I might suffer; and I felt an unaccountable liberty to ask the following signs, if it really were of Him. (1) That Mr. Fletcher might be raised up. (2) That he might be brought back to England. (3) That he would write to me on the subject before he saw me, though we had been so many years asunder without so much as a message passing on any subject. (4) That he would in that letter tell me, I had been the object of his thoughts and prayers for some years. It came to my mind further, that should this occur in the end of the year 1781 it would be a still greater confirmation, as Providence seemed to point to that season as a time of hope." After this, Mary Bosanquet seems to have sent some prescriptions to John Fletcher, and he wrote expressing his contentment with the will of God for life or death. He also sent her a long letter on Christian perfection and respecting his unpublished essay on "The New Birth"; but,

strange to say, through some accident, her reply did not reach him till three years afterwards. During this interval there seems to have been no correspondence between them.

In June, 1781, she was still in the greatest perplexity about her affairs. She writes: "The promise seemed to stand sure, yet the waters were deeper than ever. I thought, 'How shall I hold fast that word so powerfully given to me? The Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.'"

On the next day she received a letter from John Fletcher, in which he told her, "that he had for twenty-five years cherished a regard for her, which was still as sincere as ever; and that though it might appear odd he should write on such a subject, when but just returned from abroad, and without first seeing her, he could only say, his mind was so strongly drawn to do it, he believed it to be of God."

They corresponded with openness and freedom until August, when Fletcher came to Cross Hall, and spent a month there preaching in the neighbourhood with much success. He then returned to his parish; for till Mary Bosanquet's affairs were settled, she could not marry.

At this time she was encouraged by a conversation with her friend Mrs. Clapham of Leeds, who said to her, "The Lord has done so much to convince you that this is to be your deliverance; I really believe if you would take the step in faith, your way would be made plain, and I will tell you what has passed in my mind. When I was some months since, in private, much drawn out in laying your trials before the Lord, I was as if taken out of myself, and saw by the eye of faith both Mr. Fletcher and you, and that you were designed for each other, and that much glory to God would arise from your union. I

saw there were various obstacles in the way; but the chief was want of money. It seemed to me however, if you would believe and obey the order of God, all would be made clear before you. Then I saw a tall young man (it seemed to me it was your younger brother), who poured down bags of gold, not once only, or twice, but several times. Some were small, others seemed large sums; one was very large; and it was impressed on my mind that all your trials of that kind were over, and that you would never experience those difficulties any more." She then asked, "Have you more brothers than one?" Mary Bosanquet replied, "Yes, I have two, and the youngest is tall. But I never received anything in particular from him, nor have I the least reason to expect it." "Her discourse, however," says Mary Bosanquet, "made a great impression on our minds, and after asking direction from the Lord, we agreed to take the step in a fortnight."

When she had made this decision, a gentleman came forward and bought the estate; three days after another took the stock, etc., and a way opened for the settlement of each member of the family. While preparing for her departure, an unexpected present of one hundred pounds arrived from her youngest brother, and this she thankfully accepted, enabling her as it did to make her final arrangements.

It was in September that John Fletcher went home, and in October he returned to Yorkshire, intending immediately after his marriage to hasten back to his beloved flock. His stay was, however, unavoidably prolonged, and the clergyman of the parish kindly made an exchange with him, supplying his place at Madeley for a few weeks. While in Yorkshire he was not idle, and his preaching made a great impression in the neighbourhood.

At Cross Hall he took opportunities of speaking to the members of the household individually about their souls' interests, and his conversation was full of unction, his soul being habitually in the attitude of praise.

At other times he met all collectively, and gave forth words of wisdom seasoned with grace. An intimate friend of Mary Bosanquet writes of this time:—

"Our daily meals were a sacrament. When he drank to any one, it was 'Heavenly health,' or 'The cup of Salvation.' At or after the meal, he generally began, or called us to begin that verse,—

'Still, O my soul, prolong
Thy never-ceasing song;
Christ my theme, my hope, my joy!
His be all my happy days!
Praise my every hour employ;
Every breath be spent in praise!'

After dinner he often sung several verses of 'Primitive Christianity:' particularly that—

'Oh that my Lord would count me meet,
To wash His dear disciples' feet!'

Sometimes he read many of those verses with tears streaming down his face. Thus did he walk with God, filled with the spirit of his beloved Lord; confirming his love to all the family, and caring both for their spiritual and temporal concerns.

"My soul was much affected, when he asked each of us in a sweet, humble manner, 'Can you give me your friend?' To think of parting was indeed grievous to us all. Yet we did not dare to withhold her from him, as we all believed the union was of God, and would be to their present and eternal benefit."

From the same pen we have the following account of the marriage day:—

"Monday, November 12th, was the day appointed for the outward uniting of those whose hearts were before united by the Holy Spirit. On the morning of this day, several friends met together on this solemn occasion; who can all, with me, truly say, 'I have been at one Christian wedding.' Jesus was invited, and truly He was at our Cana. We reached Cross Hall before family prayers. Mr. Fletcher was dressed in his canonicals; and after giving out one of Mr. Wesley's marriage hymns, he read the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, and spoke from them in such a manner as greatly tended to spiritualize the solemnities of the day. He said, 'We invite you to our wedding; but the Holy Ghost here invites you to the marriage of the Lamb. The bride, the Lamb's wife, has made herself ready. The bride consists of the whole Church, triumphant and militant, united together. Ye may all be the bride, and Jesus will condescend to be the Bridegroom. Make yourselves ready by being filled by the Spirit'! He was very solemn in prayer, and said, 'Lord, Thou knowest, we would not take this step if we had not eternity in view, and if we were not as willing to be carried into the churchyard, as to go into the church.' At breakfast he reminded us, 'The postilions are now ready to carry us to the church, in order to see our nuptials solemnized; but death will soon be here, to transport us to the marriage of the Lamb.'

"On the way to the church (Batley Church, which was near two miles off) he spoke much of the mystery couched under marriage—namely, the union between Christ and His Church. They were married in the face of the congregation, the doors were opened, and every one came in that would. We then returned home, and

spent a considerable time in singing and prayer. We were near twenty of us. I then presented Mrs. Fletcher with some wedding hymns. She looked them over, and gave them to Mr. Fletcher. He read the Scripture at the top, namely, 'Husbands, love your wives,' and added, 'as Christ loved the Church.' Then turning to us, he said, 'My God, what a task! Help me, my friends, by your prayers to fulfil it. As Christ loved the Church! He laid aside His glory for her. He submitted to be born into our world; to be clothed with a human body, subject to all our sinless infirmities. He endured shame, contempt, pain, yea, death itself, for His Church! Oh, my God, none is able to fulfil this task without Thine Almighty aid. Help me, oh, my God! Pray for me, oh my friends!' He next read, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.' Mrs. Fletcher added, 'as unto the Lord.' 'Well, my dear,' returned Mr. Fletcher, 'only in the Lord. And if I ever wish you to do anything otherwise, resist me with all your might.' From dinner, which was a spiritual meal, as well as a natural one, till tea-time, our time was chiefly spent in fervent prayer or singing. After singing the Covenant Hymn, Mr. Fletcher went to Mrs. Fletcher and said to her, 'Well, my dearest friend, will you join with me in joining ourselves in a perpetual covenant to the Lord? Will you, with me, serve Him in His members? Will you help me to bring souls to the blessed Redeemer? And, in every possible way, this day lay yourself under the strongest ties you can to help me to glorify my gracious Lord?' She answered, like one that well knew where her strength lay, 'May my God help me so to do!'

"In the evening Mr. Valton preached in the hall from these most suitable words, 'What shall I render

unto the Lord for all His benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.' His words did not fall to the ground; many were greatly refreshed. After preaching there was a sweet contest among us; every one thought, I, in particular owe the greatest debt of praise; till we jointly agreed to sing,—

> 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
> And when my voice is lost in death,
> Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
> My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
> While life, or thought, or being last,
> Or immortality endures.'"

The bride and bridegroom remained for a season at Cross Hall, and on the following Wednesday the "select society" met. The occasion was one of deep interest. Among other things Fletcher said:—

"Some of you, perhaps, may be a little surprised at the step my dearest friend and I have taken. But I assure you it was the result of much prayer and mature deliberation. Five-and-twenty years ago, when I first saw my dear wife, I thought if I ever married she would be the person. But she was too rich for me to think of. So I banished every thought of the kind. For many years I had a distaste to a married life, thinking it impossible to be as much devoted to God in a married as in a single life. But this objection was removed, by reading, 'Enoch begat sons and daughters. And Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him.' I then saw, if Enoch at the head of a family might walk with God, and be fit for translation, our souls, under the Gospel dispensation might attain the highest degree of holiness in a similar state; still many obstacles stood in my way; but at length they

were all removed. Every mountain became a plain, and we are both well assured that the step we have taken has the full approbation of God."

The following letter, written by the Vicar of Madeley shortly after his marriage, is very characteristic. He says, "I am married, and have a new opportunity of considering a great mystery, in the most perfect type of our Lord's mystical union with His Church. I have now a new call to pray for a fulness of Christ's holy, gentle, meek, loving spirit, that I may love my wife as He loved His spouse the Church. But the emblem is greatly deficient. The Lamb is worthy of His spouse, and more than worthy: whereas I must acknowledge myself unworthy of the yoke-fellow whom Heaven has reserved for me. She is a person after my own heart; and I make no doubt we shall increase the number of the happy marriages in the Church militant. Indeed, they are not so many but it may be worth a Christian's while to add one more to the number. God declared that it was 'not good for man,' a social being, 'to live alone'; and therefore he gave him a help-meet for him. For the same reason our Lord sent forth His disciples two and two. Had I searched the three kingdoms, I could not have found one brother willing to share, gratis, my weal, woe, and labour, and complaisant enough to unite his fortune to mine. But God has found me a partner, 'a sister, a wife,' to use St. Paul's language, who is not afraid to face with me the colliers and bargemen of my parish, until death part us. Buried together in our country village, we shall help one another to trim our lamps, and to wait, as I trust you do continually, for the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom."

Fletcher's years of loneliness were now over. There is no doubt that for lack of some one to look after his

domestic affairs, he had grievously neglected proper provision for his bodily wants. Add to this his lavish expenditure of strength in the service of his people, and it is no wonder that he had utterly broken down. Rest, and the enjoyment of his native air for a few years, had been the means which God had blessed to his restoration. Now he was provided with a wife who, "by her discretion and prudence, bore the whole weight of his domestic cares; while, by the natural activity of her mind, and her deep acquaintance with Divine things, she seconded his ministerial labours with astonishing success."

Both entered upon a new era in their lives, and though the time was short during which they worked together, so entire was their union in all things, and so were they filled with the same spirit, that the survivor was prepared to superintend the carrying on of the work as one fulfilling, down to the minutest particular, the details of a sacred trust.

Greatly does the Church of Christ need a multiplication of such marriages. When the union is thus directed by God, and the two have become altogether one, the bond is close and holy beyond words to describe. Some have classed the mother's love as the highest type of earthly love, but it is a natural feeling, and we are never surprised at its gracious developments; and when sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, it becomes inexpressibly deep, and of untold power for good. But the attraction which, in a short space of time, draws together in a perfect fellowship of soul and heart and mind and life, two persons who may have been previously strangers, is surely a worthy type of Christ's love for His Church —His bride.

Such sanctified earthly unions are sacred, and those

who are thus united seldom speak to others of the fellowship they enjoy. They feel that few can understand them, while to themselves their oneness is a matter of course. They cannot *give* anything to one another, for everything that each has or is belongs equally to the other. Even those outside find it almost impossible to think or speak of one apart from the other. One spirit, one motive power seem to actuate them in their movements in life, for truly they are "no more twain, but one flesh." And it is this oneness that enables such to give up one another cheerfully when it is not possible to perform any little service, religious or social, in outward companionship, for there can be no separation of spirit to those who who are thus bound together.

It may be well now to take a glance at the sort of work carried on in the parish in which Mary Fletcher was to pass the remaining thirty-four years of her life, and in which her husband had already laboured for many years. Bishop Ryle tells us that for "twenty-five years Fletcher did the work of an evangelist among his semi-barbarous parishioners."[1] And not only as an evangelist, but as a missionary among the sick and dying, and a director of the education of the village children, he might be called a second Oberlin.

Fletcher's labours were truly "apostolic." He never thought of his own ease or comfort. He had a passion for souls, and he sought early and late to warn the sinner, and to welcome the prodigal returning to the Father's House. He gave no rest to those who willed to remain in sin, and some of these resorted to the expedient of locking their doors to keep out their pastor.

[1] "Ryle's Christian Leaders of the last Century."

On account of the excuse of some that they could not wake in time to attend the early Sunday service, Fletcher for months traversed his large parish, from end to end, every Sunday morning, with a bell, starting at five o'clock, and "inviting all the inhabitants to the House of God."

At first he "seemed to labour in vain," and the wild, hardened race of miners would not give up their cruel sports and evil ways, at the call of this strange voice crying in their midst "Repent, Repent." So great was the opposition raised, that on one occasion when the vicar was expected to pass by a bull-baiting on his way to a meeting, the men in their half intoxicated state resolved to "bait the parson." But circumstances, over which he had no control, detained the vicar, and the bull breaking loose, the rabble was dispersed, and the meeting held in peace.

Long before his marriage the Vicar of Madeley had encouraged the visits of the itinerant Methodist preachers. He knew full well how largely their labours had been blessed to the conversion of souls in other parts. He especially rejoiced for the unconverted among his people to come under their arousing preaching. At first the Vicarage kitchen was the place used for their meetings, and there the vicar himself was "one of their humblest and most prayerful hearers." Later, the kitchen becoming too small, "a barn on the premises was neatly fitted up for a preaching room." Here travelling ministers and the curate of the parish regularly preached. For the space of fifty years did the "Established Church and Wesleyanism work hand in hand" in Madeley.

Mary Fletcher was well prepared for a life full of varied occupations, such as the care of souls and bodies in so large a parish could not fail to bring upon her. But

these labours, shared by those who were "no more twain, but one," in all things, brought them into yet closer fellowship with one another while entering into the joys and sorrows of all around. To picture completely Mary Fletcher's life we must then comprehend still more fully the character of the husband with whom daily and hourly she worked and prayed hand in hand, side by side, and we are enabled from her own pen to do this. She felt his holy living to be a blessed stimulus to her to seek after the same elevated standard. Her estimate of his character is consistent with that of others,[1] but it has a value of its own, for from her he "concealed nothing." So great was his humility, that it was his choice and delight to prefer every one before himself, and this he did in so free and easy a manner that in him it appeared perfectly natural. We have said that Fletcher "concealed nothing" from his wife; there was, however, one exception to this. He had never thought it worth while to mention to her that he sprang from a noble family, allied indeed to a Royal House. The fact came to her knowledge in this way. Some time after their marriage she was speaking rather contemptuously of the distinctions of rank and wealth, when her husband remarked, "Surely, my love, you carry the matter too far, for though a Christian will not be proud of birth and fortune, nor despise another for wanting them, yet they are real advantages if we use them aright." He added that many and great were the advantages of spending childhood and youth in such a family, provided the rank and wealth were united with moral worth, education, and

[1] "No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity; no Church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister."—SOUTHEY.

gentle manners. After a little further conversation on the subject, Mary Fletcher remarked, "I thought you were the son of a common soldier." "How came you to think so?" Fletcher asked. "When I first saw you," she replied, "many years ago, one of the company asked you what your father was; and you answered, 'My father was a soldier.'" "I now recollect it," said Fletcher; "and I said true, for my father was a general: not that I meant to conceal it; but I was then young in my English. I hesitated for a term; and, seeing a private pass the window, I pointed to him, and said, My father was a soldier; meaning to designate his profession, and not his rank." "But my dear, why did you not set us right, when you must have perceived our mistake by our astonishment?" "I certainly did perceive your innocent mistake," her husband replied; "but it was not worth while either for me or you to correct it." A short time after, while searching his desk for some paper, Mary Fletcher found a handsome seal. On asking her husband why he did not use it, he replied, "Had you examined it, you would not have asked the question. You see it bears a coronet, nearly such as is the insignia of your English nobility. Were I to use that seal, it might lead to frivolous inquiries about my family; and, what is worse, subject me to the censure of valuing myself on such distinctions."

Fletcher never willingly suffered an unkindness shown to him to be mentioned again; and if it were, he generally answered, "Oh, let it drop. We must offer it in silence to the Lord."

The calls from his people were never at the wrong time to him. Sometimes his wife had to fetch him out of his study two or three times in an hour. This distressed her, especially when he was engaged in composing some

of his most important works. "But he would answer with his usual sweetness, 'Oh, my dear, never mind that. It matters not if we are but ready to meet the will of God. It is conformity to the will of God that alone makes an employment excellent.'"

His sympathy with the trials of others often led him into severe suffering. Perhaps in nothing was this pain more manifest than when observing feelings of bitterness between brethren.

Mary Fletcher writes of their experience during the Conference, in Leeds, in 1784. "When any little disputes arose between the brethren, his inmost soul groaned under the burden; and, by two or three o'clock in the morning, I was sure to hear him breathing out prayers for the peace and prosperity of Zion. When I observed to him I was afraid it would hurt his health, he would answer, 'Oh, Polly, the cause of God lies near my heart!'" His wife adds, "I dreaded his hearing of the sins or sufferings of any of his people before the time of his going to bed, knowing how strong the impressions would be on his mind, chasing sleep from his eyes. Hardly a night was passed but some part of it was spent in groans for the souls and bodies committed to his care."

And yet he told his wife that twelve or fourteen years before "he was greatly tempted to think that he was not sensible enough of the afflictions of his fellow-creatures." He thought, "Christ bore our infirmities and carried our sorrows, but I have not that Christ-like temper; I do not bear the sorrows of others." At last he prayed that a measure of this spirit might be given him. Not long after, while visiting a sick family, "such a lively sense of their afflictions suddenly fell upon his mind that he could scarcely get home." At length

having dragged himself to his house, he threw himself into a seat. Then his soul was "penetrated with such a sense of the woes of mankind as utterly depressed and overcame him, and drank up his spirits." He was as one paralysed, and all his faculties of body and mind seemed failing. At length rousing himself, he looked into his heart to find the source of this extremity, and came to the conclusion that though his prayer had been well intentioned, he had asked a burden unsuitable to a finite, and capable of being borne only by an infinite Being." After remaining some hours in this condition, he told the Lord that if this were "a purely natural event," he bowed in submission, but if an answer "to an improper prayer," he prayed that he might be restored, and shortly after strength of body and mind was given back to him. Mary Fletcher adds, "Towards *me*, his tenderness was exerted to the utmost extent. My soul, my body, my health, my ease and comfort were his daily study. His temporal affairs he committed solely to me, though he was always ready to assist me in the smallest matters. My spiritual advancement was his constant endeavour; and to this he was continually stirring me up, inviting me to walk more closely with God. His own communion with God appeared unbroken; it was this he continually sought after. He had the greatest government of his words; indeed, he both acted and spoke and thought as under the eye of God. And thus he remained unmoved in all occurrences; at all times, and on every occasion possessing inward recollection. But no one could converse in a more lively and sensible manner, even on natural things, when he saw it was to the glory of God."

It was not in a day that this man of strong passionate temperament became gentle and full of that love which

hopeth and believeth and beareth all things. Before he had fully received this Christ-like spirit, he used at times to remain prostrate on the floor whole nights before God, with many tears and with strong cries, that He would give him the victory over his own spirit. The prayer was answered, and while he afterwards received many provocations from friends and foes, he only gloried in the humiliation and the pain, rejoicing to be counted worthy to suffer persecution for his Lord's sake. Allusion to his carefulness touching pecuniary matters must not be omitted. In this as in all other things his wife entirely sympathized with him. God was glorified, not only by his liberality (for he gave away all his stipend and more), but in his freedom from debt. Mary Fletcher thus writes, "Never did I behold any one more dead to the things of the world. His treasure was above; and so was his heart also. It was his constant endeavour to preserve a mind free and disencumbered; and he was exceedingly wary of undertaking any business that might distract and hurry it. Nevertheless in his worldly concerns, knowing himself to be a steward for God, he would not, through carelessness, waste one penny. He likewise judged it to be his bounden duty to demand what he knew to be his right, and yet he could well reconcile this with that word, 'He that hath thy coat, let him take thy cloke also.' But whether he had less or more it was the same thing upon his own account; as he had no other use for it, after frugally supplying his own wants and the wants of those dependent on him, but to spread the Gospel and assist the poor. And he frequently said he was never happier than when he had given the last penny he had in the house. If at any time I had gold in my drawer, it seemed to afford him no comfort; but if he could find a handful of small

silver when he was going out to see the sick, he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would on discovering a bag of hid treasure. He was never better pleased with my employment, than when he had set me to prepare food or physic for the poor. He was hardly able to relish his dinner, if some sick neighbour had not a part of it; and sometimes, when any one of them was in want, I could not keep the linen in his drawers. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people, who came from a distance to hear the word. And his house as well as his heart was devoted to their convenience.

"He frequently said to me, 'Oh, Polly, can we not do without beer? Let us drink water and eat less meat. Let our necessities give way to the extremities of the poor.' But with all his generosity and charity he was strictly careful to follow the advice of the Apostle: 'Owe no man anything.' He contracted no debt. He made it a rule to pay ready money for everything. Meanwhile his substance, his time, his strength, his life were devoted to the service of the poor. And last of all, he gave *me* to them; for when we were married, he asked me solemnly, 'Whether I were willing to marry his parish?' And the first time he led me among his people in this place he said, 'I have not married my wife for myself, but for *you*. I asked her from the Lord for *your* comfort as well as my own!'"

It was not wonderful that some of the richer saints should delight to dispense of their temporal goods to those who were so careless of their own comfort. While accepting these benefits John Fletcher preferred to receive only the *simplest* things. But whatever was the gift, he acknowledged it in such a way as to carry spiritual instruction. To two beloved friends he writes, "I submit to be clothed and nourished by you, as your

servants are, without having the happiness of serving you. To yield to this is as hard to friendship as to submit to be saved by free grace without a scrap of our own righteousness." Then relieving his mind by warm thanks for the "fine and good broadcloth," he commends to his friend the "precious fine robe of Jesus' righteousness to cover his soul," adding, "The moth may fret your present, or the tailor may spoil it in cutting, but the present which Jesus has made you is out of the reach of the spoiler, and ready for present use; nor is there any fear of cutting it out wrong, for it is seamless, woven from the top throughout with the white, unbroken warp of thirty-three years' perfect obedience, and the red weft of His agony and sufferings and death." Enough has been said of the work in the parish, and of the character of its saintly vicar, to enable us in some degree to realize Mary Fletcher's daily life, but two or three events of special interest remain to be noticed.

The laying of the foundation of the Sabbath School-room at Madeley was the last public work in which Fletcher was employed; but the previous labour of organizing the Sabbath Schools in different parts of this widely spread parish, must have entailed much labour on both John and Mary Fletcher. In Madeley alone at the commencement of the work, three hundred children came together. They were taught reading and writing. Hymn books were given them, and they were told to obtain from some one they knew, instruction in singing the hymns. They were delighted with this "new employment," and were gratified by receiving little rewards from their good vicar, whose happy mode of addressing them was well adapted to attract them, while, at the same time, imparting instruction to their minds.

The dangers which the Vicar of Madeley went through

in connection with his ministry were not few. Mary Fletcher's account of one incident is especially interesting as showing her strong faith; she writes:—

"My husband having appointed to preach one Sunday, at a church about fourteen miles off, I felt some concern for his riding so far, and doing the whole Sunday's duty twice; especially as it was necessary for him to return home the same night. The evening being exceedingly dark and wet, I was strongly led to commend him to God in prayer. While I was doing this, it was suggested to me, that his horse was fallen, and had thrown him over his head. And the whole scene appeared to be clearly presented before my eyes. 'My God,' said I, 'he is Thine. His life, his limbs, his health, all are Thine! I commit him to Thee by faith.' Immediately that word was impressed upon my heart, 'The righteous is in the hand of the Lord; and there shall no evil touch him.' And it filled my soul with such a sweetness that I could feel no fear. The night was uncommonly bad, which occasioned many friends to continue with me. And while they expressed their great uneasiness at his staying two hours longer than we could well account for, I was obliged to hide the calmness I felt by silence, lest some should have supposed insensibility. At last he came well, and praising God; but asked for water to wash himself, because his horse had fallen, and thrown him with great force over his head. Yet, glory be to God, he was no way hurt except having a little skin grazed from one of his fingers. As he set the Lord always before him, so he found His help in every time of need."

It was a great effort to Mary Fletcher to break away from the absorbing and delightful home life, but they felt called to cross the Channel to Ireland. It was after

repeated solicitations that she and her husband decided to go so far. Having no money to spare for so long a journey, Fletcher "laid the matter before the Lord, requesting that, if the journey were a providential opening to do good, the means of performing it might be forthcoming." Shortly afterwards he received an unexpected sum of money, and they started on the journey accompanied by their servant Sally. This faithful young woman had been taken a motherless child under Mary Fletcher's loving care, and had come with her to Madeley. Sally here repaid the care bestowed upon her in childhood and youth, by devotion to all the interests of her master and mistress, being to them as a daughter. It was in the summer of 1783 that this journey was undertaken. It was formidable to Mary Fletcher who had a great dread of the sea. They are described as "appearing for a season in another kingdom as two burning and shining lights."

Their labours were largely blessed to the building up of believers and to the conversion of sinners. From that time the society, then numbering five hundred, rapidly increased to one thousand. In Dublin, John Fletcher preached several times in the French Church, to the descendants of the Huguenots. On the first occasion he addressed them on the appropriate words, "Rappelez dans votre mémoire les premiers temps, auxquels, après avoir été éclairés, vous avez soutenu un grand combat de souffrances" (Heb. x. 32). Some of the English followed him to these services, and when asked why they went, seeing that they could not understand the language, they replied; "We went to look at him, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance."

We have also the record that his countenance preached to the ungodly, for so did it reflect the light

of heaven that the son of that holy man, Perronett (Vicar of Shoreham, Kent), was led to seek after heavenly things, from seeing the peace and joy written there.

The following reminiscence of their visit to Ireland is so characteristic of John Fletcher's habitual unselfishness (in which his wife was one with him), that we are reluctant to omit it. It is from the pen of a gentleman who enjoyed much of their company during this "holy visit." He writes: "I wish it were in my power to send you any anecdotes of our dear deceased friend, but unless I were to send you an account of the words and actions of every day, I know not where to begin. One particular circumstance, however, I will relate. Upon his going to leave us, knowing the scanty pittance [on an average of not more than one hundred pounds per year] he received from his parish, we thought it but an act of common honesty to refund him the expense he had been at in coming, and to bear his charges back again. Accordingly, after he had preached on the last evening of his stay amongst us, the steward and trustees united to press his acceptance of a small purse, not as a present, but as a debt justly due to him. But he firmly and absolutely refused it. At length, being very urgent with him, and importunate to an excess, he took the purse in his hand. 'Well,' said he, 'do you really force it upon me? Must I accept of it? Is it entirely mine? And may I do with it as I please?' 'Yes, yes,' we all replied. 'God be praised, then, God be praised,' said he, casting his brimful eyes to heaven; 'behold what a mercy is here! Your Poor's Fund was just out; I heard some of you complaining that it was never so low before. Take this purse. God has sent it to you, raised it among yourselves, and bestowed it upon your poor. You cannot deny me. It is sacred to them. God be

praised! I thank you, I heartily thank you, my dear, kind brethren!'

"Thus was his free gospel a bountiful provision for our poor, while this last generous action served to harrow in the precious seed that his labour of love had been sowing among us. Indeed, it was a crowning of his labours, a sealing of his message, that will never be forgotten by us, that is registered in the pages of eternity, and will follow him among those works that he ever gloried to cast at the feet of Jesus."

Two or three extracts from Mary Fletcher's diary, written during her married life, follow. The first is without date. "No words can express the treasure I possess in our union. It is such as I had no idea was to be enjoyed in a marriage state; *and in proportion as I get nearer to God, I find a daily increase of that union;* and yet I am enabled so to give him up to the Lord, that it holds my soul in a quiet dependence and sweet adherence to the will of God."

The next entry is written in 1782.

"*Nov. 1st.*—I feel the care which a new place and a new situation are apt to bring, and it disturbs the peace which should be kept in my soul. Lord, increase my faith! There are many peculiar circumstances in our affairs, and strangers are concerned therein; but, in the end, I have found all work for good: it has been to me a good and useful lesson. First, I find it a cause of rejoicing that I have found so much love to the persons concerned in it; and, secondly, while I was praying about it, it seemed as if the Lord showed me, as immediately from Himself, that I was not required to have any anxious care; but that, doing as well as I could, I might leave all to God. And if still I could not have things as I could wish, that it was the most

profitable cross in the world; for it may be helpful to the soul, after doing all we can, to appear a fool in the eyes of men. These words always were much on my mind,—

'Fix on His work thy constant eye;
So shall thy work be done.'

I now felt a sweet calm, waiting on the will of God; and could say, 'Lord, I leave everything to Thee!' 'One only care my soul shall know!' As I was telling the whole affair to my dearest husband, he said, 'Polly, do not encumber yourself for my sake. If we must be thought ignorant and awkward, let us submit to it. I require nothing of thee, my Polly, but to be more and more devoted to God!'"

"*July 26th*, 1785.—This summer being dry, I have had much opportunity of going about. One day at the Rough Park, I had a peculiar instance of the goodness of God. A wicked, rude fellow bound himself and another young man, whom he had drawn in under a blasphemous oath, that they would be there by the time we began, [the meeting] in order to make a disturbance. Accordingly, about six o'clock, he was for setting off, when he was suddenly struck as with death! All about him really thought he was dying. He continued thus for some hours. Oh, how easily can the Lord put His bridle into the jaws of those He would restrain! I gave it out to be there again that day fortnight. In the meantime I walked to a distant place rather beyond my strength. On my return home, I felt very weary, and the thought passed through my mind, 'My soul is too swift for my body;' for it seemed as if it would fly to those places where there appeared a call. That night I began to grow ill, and it terminated in a fever. Now I had a fresh instance of the tender care and love of my

blessed partner; sickness was made pleasant by his kind attention. When the day came for me to be at the Rough Park, he went himself, but was so penetrated with the thought of losing me, that he preached, as it were my funeral sermon; and the dear people joined him in his feelings and prayers. During this illness, many thoughts passed my mind which I can scarcely account for. For a good while past my dear husband has joined with me in prayer in an uncommon manner. We are led to offer ourselves to do and suffer the will of God. Something seems to tell me that I must have more of the bitter cup; and these words are much with me, 'That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' My prayer is, that the evil day may be before death, not at the last. But, Lord Thy will—Thy whole will be done. Certainly I have now scarce any cross. Thou hast made my cup to run over. Yea, Thou hast made me to forget all my sorrows. It seems as if I had never suffered anything . . . but, Lord, I want more grace."

It must have been about the time that the foregoing entry was penned that John Fletcher mentioned to his wife a peculiar manifestation of love which he received in his own house, with the application of these words, "Thou shalt walk with Me in white." He added, "It is a little thing so to hang upon God by faith, as to feel no departure from Him, and no rising in the heart against Him. This does not satisfy me. And I sometimes find such gleams of light and love, such wafts, as it were, of the heavenly air, so powerful as if they would just then take my soul with them to glory! But I am not filled; I want to be filled with all the fulness of God." His wife says, "He was peculiarly penetrated with a sense of the nearness of eternity There was

scarce an hour in which he was not calling upon us to drop every thought and every care, that we might attend to nothing but the drinking deeper into God. We spent much time in wrestling with God, and were led in a peculiar manner to abandon our whole selves, our souls and bodies, into the hands of God; ready to do, and willing to suffer whatever was well-pleasing to Him." On one occasion, when on his knees praying for guidance whether he should go to London or no, the answer seemed given to him, "Not to London, but to thy grave." When telling his wife, he said, with a heavenly smile, "Satan would represent it to me as something dreadful, enforcing the words, 'The cold grave, the cold grave.'" But this constant sense of the nearness of the unseen world caused no depression. The beloved Vicar entered into every department of the work "with unusual cheerfulness, and seemed to increase in strength of body as well as in strength of soul."

On Thursday, August 4th, he was taken ill, and by Saturday night was in a high fever, yet he not only preached on the Sabbath, but administered the communion to a large number, remaining through a service of four hours' continuance. In his first prayer he said, "Lord, Thou wilt manifest Thy strength in weakness; we confer not with flesh and blood, but put our trust under the shadow of Thy wings." Faintness again and again threatened to overpower him, but he persevered in speaking to his beloved people. The scene was truly affecting; at one part of the service his wife pressed through the crowd to entreat him to desist from further attempts to accomplish the impossible, but he, believing that Divine strength would bear him through, refused. The window being opened, and a nosegay of sweet smelling flowers thrown to him, he seemed refreshed,

and as the theme of his discourse opened before him, and he expatiated on the subject of "mercy," he was carried above the weakness of the body. His text was, "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings."

In that solemn hour every eye was riveted upon him, and his words seemed to penetrate the hearts of his hearers with irresistible power. After service he walked up to the communion table uttering these words, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim, before the mercy-seat."

From the church he was supported to his chamber, where he fainted, and remained long unconscious. "After this," Mary Fletcher tells us, "he dropped into a sleep, and on awaking cried out with a pleasant smile, 'Now, my dear, thou seest I am no worse for doing the Lord's work. He never fails me when I wait on Him.'" Whenever he awoke during the evening it was with praises in his mouth. At night the fever returned. But there were many opportunities of most blessed intercourse between the husband and wife.

On Monday and Tuesday, while he was lying on the couch in his study, they had seasons of communion which were a foretaste of heaven. "While he slept," Mary Fletcher continues, "I besought the Lord, if it were His good pleasure, to spare him a little longer. But my prayer seemed to have no wings, and I could not help mingling continually therewith, 'Lord, give me resignation.' This uncertainty made me tremble. . . . I cried to the Lord, and these words were deeply impressed on my spirit, 'Where I am there shall My servants be, that they may behold My glory.' This

promise was full of matter, as well as unction to my soul. Awaking sometime after, he said, 'Polly, I will tell you what I have been thinking of; it was Israel's fault that they asked for signs; we will not do so; but abandoning our whole selves into the hands of God, we will there lie patiently before Him, assured that He will do all things well.'

"On Wednesday, after groaning all day, as it were, under the weight of the power of God, he told me he had received such a manifestation of the full meaning of that word 'God is love' as he could never be able to tell. 'It fills me,' said he, 'it fills me every moment. Oh, Polly! my dear Polly! God is love! Shout, shout aloud! Oh, it so fills me, I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth. But it seems as if I could not speak much longer; let us fix on a sign between ourselves;' (tapping me twice with his dear finger) 'now I mean God is love, and we will draw each other into God: observe! by this we will draw one another into God.' Sally coming in, he cried out, 'Oh, Sally! God is love! shout both of you; I want to hear you shout His praise!'

"All this time the medical friend who attended him with unwearied diligence hoped he was in no danger. He knew it to be the fever, but he thought the symptoms amazingly mild; for though the disease was commissioned to take his life, yet it seemed so restrained by the power of God that we truly discerned in it the verity of those words, 'Death is yours.'

"On Thursday his speech began to fail. While he was able he continued speaking to all who came in his way. To his doctor he would not be silent while he had any power of speech; often saying, 'Oh, sir, you take much thought for my body; give me leave to take thought for

your soul!' And I believe his words will remain with him for ever.

"On Friday . . . as I was kneeling by his bed, with my hand in his, entreating the Lord to be with us in that tremendous hour, he strove to say many things, but could not; pressing my hand, and often repeating the sign, at last he breathed out, 'Head of the Church, be head to my wife!' He had always delighted much in these words,—

'Jesu's blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!'

and whenever I repeated them to him would answer, 'Boundless, boundless, boundless!'

"In allusion to them, he now replied, though with great difficulty,—

'Mercy's full power I soon shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love!'"

On Saturday the fever subsided, and those around him believed he was better. One said, "Do you think the Lord will raise you up?" He strove to answer, "Raise me up at the resurrection," but could hardly frame the words. In the evening the fever returned. "As night drew on," his wife writes, "I thought him dying, and said to him, 'My dear creature, I ask not for myself, I know thy soul, but for the sake of others, if Jesus is very present with thee, lift thy right hand.' He did so. I added, 'If the prospect of glory sweetly opens before thee, repeat the sign.' He then raised it, and in half a minute a second time; then threw it up with all his remaining strength." Shortly after he appeared to sleep, but with his eyes open, and with a composed and triumphant look upon his face, he sat up leaning against pillows, remaining in this position for

twenty-four hours, breathing as one in common sleep. A friend who had left his own flock to spend that solemn Sabbath at Madeley, thus writes of the state of the parish: "While their pastor was breathing out his soul into the hands of 'a faithful Creator,' his people were offering up their supplications on his behalf. . . . The whole village wore an air of consternation and sadness. . . . Hasty messengers were passing to and fro with anxious inquiries and confused reports. . . . and the members of every family sat together in silence that day awaiting, with trembling expectation, the issue of every hour. After evening service, some of the poor, who came from distant parts, still lingered about the house, and seemed unable to tear themselves away without a sight of their pastor. Secretly informed of their desire, I obtained for them the permission they desired. . . They slowly moved one by one along the gallery, pausing as they passed by his open door, and casting in a look of mingled supplication and anguish, and then dragged themselves away from the presence of their dying pastor, with the distressing conviction that they should 'see his face no more.'" Not long after, this faithful under shepherd, who had spent his strength for his flock, left them to the protection of the great and good Shepherd, and entered upon the higher service of heaven. But with such secrecy did the unseen messenger execute his commission, that the watchers, who were gazing intently upon the beautiful face, could not determine the moment of departure. Fletcher died on Aug. 14th, 1785, at the age of only fifty-six years. He had said, "Let there be no pomp, no expense, no ceremony, at my funeral. The coffin of the parish poor will suit me best." These desires were faithfully carried out by his widow; "a plain oak coffin, with steel plate, bore his

honoured remains" to the grave, 'without a pall, pall-bearers, scarf, or hat-band." On Aug. 17th, 1785, he was buried in Madeley churchyard, amidst the tears and lamentations of thousands, of whom many never knew the true value of their vicar until they had lost him. The survivor, worn out by days and nights of unceasing care for her husband, did not realize all at once the heavenly peace which eventually rested upon her. Satan took advantage of her weakness, but only to a certain point was he permitted to harass her; and while drinking the bitter cup of sorrow and temptation commingled, she never for a moment doubted that her soul was in the keeping of her God and Saviour. She thus speaks of the "hour and power of darkness":—

"Not only my beloved, but, it appeared to me, my Saviour also was torn from me. Clouds and darkness surrounded both soul and body! The sins, even of my infancy, came before me, and assailed me as thick as hail. . . . An unshaken belief that Christ would bring me through all was my great support; and it seemed to me that I must have been annihilated had I been moved from that anchor. . . . As I never before had any idea of the bitter anguish with which the Lord saw fit to visit me at this season, so I can give no just description of it. . . . What bound all my other trials upon me was, I felt continually the keenest accusations from Satan constraining me by every possible suggestion to look at my extreme sensibility in suffering as being deeply sinful." In between the seasons of anguish came little "inbreakings of light," and in the darkest moments she continually cried, "Thy will be done; I will, yes, I will glorify Thee even in the fire."

Although so bowed with mental suffering, Mary Fletcher roused herself to write to the parishioners a

short address, which was read at the funeral; and on the day after, hearing that some exaggerated reports of her husband's sufferings had been circulated, she wrote a long account of his last days. This letter, which was addressed to John Wesley, was at once printed. We see that the heat of the furnace was becoming less terrible, for she thus speaks of her sorrow, "But it is alleviated by the thought, united in God we cannot be divided." This realization was ever present with her during her years of loneliness. The germ of the union of heart and soul with him had begun to develop in the far past. For long years it lay hidden, apparently dormant; but when at last brought to the light, it sprang up and grew till it sheltered her whole life. The severing stroke left her desolate, but she realized that time and absence had no power to prevent the further unfolding of this love, grounded as it was in the eternal love.

When asking her husband, in case he should be taken from her, to leave with her his directions, since she desired to form her whole life thereby, he replied, "No, not by mine; the Holy Ghost shall direct thee." And when Sally Lawrence said to him, "Oh, my dear master, should you be taken away, what a disconsolate creature will my poor dear mistress be!" He answered, "God will be her all in all!" Doubtless she received this charge and this assurance from her husband's dying lips as a precious legacy. And with full trust in God, a few days after the funeral, she gave herself to work in the parish and neighbourhood, finding, as thousands have found, that work for Christ is the best antidote to the paralysing effects of sorrow.

The new vicar allowed her not only to remain in the Vicarage, but to choose the curate by whom the duties of the living were to be performed; assigning as the

reason of his conduct that she knew better than himself what would suit and benefit the parishioners. This important permission she always exercised, with much prayer to God for direction in her choice. In private and public her labours were largely blessed. The Methodist itinerant preachers made her house their home when coming to that neighbourhood. Madeley was a centre to which the seeking and religious people for miles round resorted for spiritual help, and to Mary Fletcher's early Sabbath meetings many came from a distance prepared to remain during the day. Some two or three hundred attended these nine o'clock meetings.

This meeting broke up in time for the service at the parish church, and afterwards the poor from a distance were welcome to partake of the "hospitality of the Vicarage kitchen."

Strangers visiting Madeley for religious purposes were invited to her own table. Others brought provisions, and in fine weather met in groups in the fields for conversation and prayer. Before the afternoon service Mary Fletcher held a meeting, in which she read and commented upon the memoir of some "eminent, holy person."

Her week evening meetings were thronged, and frequently clergymen from neighbouring parishes attended them. Her faithful Sally proved a most useful helper in the work, and often addressed gatherings of seeking people, speaking (her mistress tells us) with more power than she did herself.

Amid this care for those outside, family claims were not forgotten. It was with some anxiety and shrinking that she had the prospect of a visit from her husband's nephew from Switzerland.

She had never seen him, and to receive him without her husband was very painful.

As was her custom, she carried this burden to her all-sympathizing Friend, asking that heavenly wisdom might be given her to deal with one who she had reason to believe was opposed to all religion.

She was anxious in common daily intercourse, in the books they read together, etc., that nothing might be said or done by her that should give him a disgust to religion and Christian people.

Long months she bore his soul upon her heart before her Lord, and to her intense joy the young man, so worldly when he arrived at Madeley, went back to Switzerland a sincere Christian, anxious to become the means of spiritual blessing to his circle.

We must add some extracts from Mary Fletcher's diary, written during her widowhood :—

"*Sept. 21st*, 1785.—Ah, Lord, my soul is exceeding sorrowful. How lonely does my situation appear! Torn from my dear companion, and made to walk in this dreary path. But this is my greatest weight,—I do not feel that union with Thee that would make up all. There are indeed moments in which a glimpse of Thy love seems to unite me to all good, and wipes away every tear. But these are transient touches, and I am deeply oppressed with the fear that I am not approved in Thy sight, because I do not 'rejoice ever more.' . . . O Lord, do all Thy will upon me, but make me wholly conformable to Thy Divine nature! Glorify Thyself in Thy poor creature. I feel as if soul and body would be divided by this terrible wrench ; yet I acquiesce in Thy Divine disposal. Yes, I see and admire Thy wisdom. I bow down to a dispensation I do not clearly understand ; the Lord hath done it, and that shall be enough to satisfy me."

After it had been made plain to Mary Fletcher that

her husband's wish for her to remain at Madeley could be carried out, and that she might continue to reside at the Vicarage, she writes :—

"*Oct. 3rd.*—From this time I have been more and more convinced my inheritance is appointed of the Lord, and that this is the spot I am to fix on, at least for the present; and I rather believe I shall change no more, but that where he died I shall die also. During this heavy night of sorrow (attended with such aggravating circumstances as it is not needful to explain) I have also seen an amazing mixture of the tender care and fatherly protection of my God. 'He withholds His rough wind in the day of His east wind,' and will lay no more on His poor creatures than His power and goodness will enable them to bear. I know assuredly that my bereavement has wrought for the good of my soul. Yes, I love His will! I love His cross! I am, I will be devoted to His glory! And if that can be promoted by my keen anguish, I will delight in suffering all His wisdom shall appoint!

"I see also the goodness of the Lord in our bringing Sally Lawrence with us here. The day we were married, as soon as we returned from the church and went upstairs to ask a blessing on our union, she came into the room and, falling on her knees before my dear husband, entreated him not to part her from her dear mistress, who had brought her up. He told her he never would, and now she is made to me a great comfort, having all the usefulness of a housekeeper, added to the affection of the tenderest child. The Lord has also answered my dear husband's prayers with regard to the work of the Lord. When he repeatedly expressed his desire that I should stay here, I replied, 'Oh, how can I bear the place without thee? How can I bear to stay and see

perhaps a carnal ministry?' He answered, 'Thou dost not know what God may do. Perhaps there may never be a carnal ministry here!' And so it proved. The Rev. Mr. Gilpin and his wife, being on the spot, were at that season kind and tender friends to me; and Mr. Kenerson desired him to supply the church till he should return to his own living, which was not for some months. The Lord then provided for us a precious young man, Mr. Melville Horne, concerning whom my dear Mr. Fletcher had (before his illness) expressed a desire that he might be his successor. Brotherly love takes root and flourishes among us. The work goes on well; fresh converts are continually brought in, and several have, with flowing eyes, declared that the Word they once slighted now seemed to rise in judgment against them. They bow to the truth, and are constrained to acknowledge, concerning their deceased pastor, 'He being dead, yet speaketh.'"

In reference to her temporal affairs she thus writes: "As I wished to be free for the remainder of my short days from unnecessary care, I had a desire that the estate at Leytonstone should be sold, and the demands settled at once. I found, however, that could not be done without loss, and, therefore, proposed to pay yearly all I could out of my income, which was now increased by the tender care of my dear husband. But my youngest brother, William Bosanquet, whom I had not seen for some years, came down on a visit to me. He expressed the greatest sympathy and tenderness towards me in this time of trial; and, after staying with me some days, generously supplied me with all the cash I then needed. Some months after, an uncle dying without leaving me anything (and, indeed, I did not think I had any right to expect it), my brothers wrote

me word that they were sorry I was not remembered in the will; and my youngest brother desired me to accept of five hundred pounds (or more if I wanted it) to settle all my affairs. Here was the exact fulfilment of Mrs. Clapham's impression concerning us!

"This very brother whom *she* then saw did afterwards, as it was represented to her, 'bring me many smaller sums, and at last one so large as to remove all burdens at once from my shoulders.'"

In January, 1787, she writes:—

"I now owe no man anything but love; my income is quite clear, and I have, according to the promise, great 'plenty of silver.'"

"*August, 15th,* 1788.—Last night was the anniversary of my dear husband's death. Three years I have now passed in solemn, awful widowhood; but glory be to my God! I have found it three years of prayer. Never did I know three years of such suffering, and never did I know three years of such prayer."

In 1789 she describes a conversation with her husband in a dream. On going to bed she prayed for a less disturbed night than she had often had of late. She writes of their meeting: "We ran into each other's arms. I wished to ask him several questions concerning holiness, and the degree to be expected here, etc., but I found something like a dark cloud on my memory, so that I said in myself, 'I cannot frame the question I would ask, I am not permitted.' At length I asked, 'My dear, do you not visit me sometimes.' He answered, 'Many times a day.' 'But,' said I, 'do not principalities and powers strive to hinder you from communing with me?' He said, 'There is something in that.' 'And does their opposition cause you to suffer in coming to me?' He answered, 'There is not much in that.' 'But

do you know every material thing that occurs to me?' 'Yes.' 'And may I always know that thou art near me, when I am in trouble, or pain, or danger?' He paused and said faintly, 'Why, yes;' then added, 'but it is as well for thee not to know it, for thy reliance must not be upon me.'"

In her movements in life Mary Bosanquet had often been encouraged by dreams and by impressions made upon her mind. From this cause she has been accused of enthusiasm, but we are told that in her case her belief in "the supernatural origin of the dreams and impressions had no other effect than that of rendering her attentive to the moral lessons that they seemed adapted to convey; they encouraged but did not impel her to act." We would not stamp too highly as of Divine origin all the dreams and visions which were helpful to the subject of this sketch. Some were probably the reflex of the cogitations of her waking hours. Is it wonderful, however, that those who are hungering after full communion with Heaven, and those who are following their Lord closely, as well as those who require warning, should have special Divine messages sent to them? and it is not for us to determine how these messages shall be conveyed, whether by a secret whisper, or by a dream, or by any other process. There are many well authenticated facts which show that when God has a purpose to effect, He does (as He has done through all ages) still use extraordinary means whereby His will is revealed to man. At the same time, His children need not be looking out for such manifestations. It is generally His good pleasure that, through the enlightenment of the judgment, or through providential circumstances, the right path should be found by those who wait to know and who desire wholly to do His will.

The following extract from the journal shows us how watchful Mary Fletcher was over her heart in the midst of earthly interests and cares:—

"*June 26th*, 1790.—I am much led this morning to pray for a resigned will to stand to the beck of my Lord with a ready mind. Yes, He shall do with me and mine as seems to Him good. Company in the house is a great cross; they consume much time, and the serving tables seems to clash with my Sabbath employment. But in this also, Thou, my Lord, shalt dispose and direct, only give me a watchful mind, and then set me to entertain all the strangers Thou pleasest. I know not what blessed angels may come with them as their attendants. . . . But I see there needs a determination to be singular. Some professors, when they have company in the house, sit chatting with them all day. This I must not do. It was one of the first lessons God taught me: to keep to my rules of retirement; to do my business, as to writing, visiting the sick, meeting the classes, etc.; leaving them to their freedom and taking mine. One part of my work must not overturn another."

"*August 14th.*—What have I seen within these five years! This day five years my beloved was on his death-bed. But how is it with me now? I answer, and from the ground of my heart, 'It is well.' I have nothing to do but to praise. I love him at this moment as much as ever I did in my life; but I love the will of God still better. Yes, I adore Thee, my Almighty Saviour, that Thou hast done Thine own will and not mine! and that my dearest love has been five years in glory."

"*September 12th*, 1792.—This summer I have been much called to speak in the name of the Lord; and

such a way has been made for me, as to weather and conveyance, and various circumstances, that it fully convinced me I have no need of care. Oh, how sweet is that command, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee!' I do not know, also, that ever I felt such help and liberty from the Lord in all my life as I have done in speaking this year, both winter and summer, at home and abroad. It is a cross to the flesh, but glory be to Thee, Thy light doth shine on my ways!"

At one time Mary Fletcher was troubled by the feeling that she "did not hold the blessing of sanctification so steadily" as she might, and she sought to know the reason. It seemed to her that her Lord showed her that while seeking to abide in Him under peculiar trials, she had at times given way to the temptation to discouragement, and the power to bear the trial was thus weakened.

In 1799 a great sorrow threatened to overshadow the busy life at the Vicarage. Sally Lawrence, who had fallen into poor health, became worse, and Mary Fletcher feared that the parting was at hand. In this hour she was upheld by "clinging to the will of God." She describes Sally as "the tenderest of daughters; a spiritual friend both to body and soul; in short, the staff of her old age."

These two devoted servants of the Lord kept a "sort of inn," receiving with open-hearted hospitality all who came from a distance to inquire the way to the Kingdom; and Sally Lawrence took all the domestic care, besides assisting largely in the spiritual work. Sally lingered till the end of 1800. Mary Fletcher writes of her departure under date of January 1st, 1801. ". . . On December 3rd my dearest child and friend

went triumphantly to glory! I was helped to write an account of her devoted life and happy death, and read it to the society while her precious corpse was in the house. I have now scarce strength to look it over. How does the Lord help us in the needful hour! But oh, what a loss do I sustain! God only knows what she was to me, and Himself alone can fill the void."

We see by the following entries in the Journal that advancing years had no power to lessen the strength of Mary Fletcher's warm affections, or the intensity of her interest for souls.

"*Nov. 12th*, 1805.—This day is particularly solemn to me. It is just twenty-three years this morning, both by the year and by the day, since I was at this very hour going to Batley church, to give my hand to my dearly beloved Mr. Fletcher. Oh what fears did I feel, lest it should be a step out of God's way. The light I had before seemed that morning to be quite obscure, but as soon as it was over, the light broke out on my soul, and it hath shone clearer and clearer ever since. Blessed be God that I ever took that step. It was the Lord that brought us together, and joined us in an eternal union. Nor do I find that union any less; nay, it is at this moment far greater than on that day. Oh, that I were more spiritual! then I should partake more fully of the inheritance which he enjoys in the kingdom of our Father.

"*March 20th*, 1809.—Yesterday was a comfortable Sabbath. The Lord carried me through all the four meetings, and blessed me with His gracious presence, glory be to His holy Name!

"*June 19th*, 1812.—The dear people so flock to us that my room will scarcely hold them; and the Lord hath been very present indeed.

"*Jan. 2nd*, 1815.—The Sabbath yesterday was precious to me. Oh, I long that the year 1815 may be the best of my life. . . . Those words have been sweet to me—'I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely.' Looking back on my past life, and seeing so many blunders, I felt a weight, when the above words were spoken to my heart.

"*Aug. 3rd.*—I have had some trials with regard to [church] affairs! but I have full confidence all shall end well. We have had a oneness among our people, but now there is a division. I have been joined to the people united to Mr. Wesley for above three-score years, and I trust to die among them. The life of true religion is among them, and the work increases.

"*Aug. 6th.*—Blessed be the Lord, the work goes on; and I feel very thankful that the Lord has answered prayer in the appointment of our preachers. I do feel the Lord orders all.

"*Aug. 14th.*—Thirty years since, this day, I drank the bitter cup, and closed the eyes of my beloved husband, and now I am myself in a dying state. Come, my adorable Saviour, I lie at Thy feet, I long for Thy fulness.

"*Oct. 26th.*—I have had a bad night, but asking help of the Lord for closer communion, my precious Lord applied that word, 'I have borne thy sins in My own body on the tree.' I feel His presence. I seem near death; but I long to fly into the arms of my beloved Lord; I feel His loving-kindness surrounds me."

This appears to have been the last record in the Journal. Mary Fletcher lived on till the 9th of the following December. During the last three weeks her breathing became more oppressed than usual, yet she *would* speak to the people, though, as she said, "It is

like as if every meeting would take away my life, but I will speak to them while I have my breath."

During her latter days she was waited on with the tender devotion of a daughter, by her friend Miss Tooth, upon whose head she sought the richest heavenly blessings. Her mind reverted to the days of her youth, and on one occasion she said with a bright look, "That promise given me, many years ago, now comes with fresh power, 'Thou shalt walk with Me in white,' and that also, 'I will thoroughly purge away thy tin,' adding:

'Everlasting life is won,
Glory is on earth begun!'"

She was assisted to her chamber on the last evening, and after getting into bed she said to Miss Tooth, "Let our hearts be united in prayer, and the Lord bless both thee and me." These were her last words. Later on in the night her friend, who had been listening to the laboured breathing, noticed that all was quiet. She writes, "I thought 'Is she dropped asleep?' It immediately came to my mind, 'Asleep in Jesus.' I went directly to the bedside where I found the body without the immortal spirit, which had entered the realms of endless day. My feelings are not to be described. I clung to the casket of the saint; I knelt down by the side of it, and cried to Him who had just now called home the spirit of my friend, that some portion of her spirit might rest on me. Her countenance was as sweet a one as was ever seen in death."

The life which we have here sought to portray speaks for itself in its many-sided teaching. Those who, like Mary Fletcher, are willing to abandon themselves to Heavenly guidance and teaching will, like her, find a sphere in which they may bring glory to God and blessing to souls.

"STRONG IN THE LORD."

MARY HALL.

Not always with rejoicing
This ministry is wrought,
For many a sigh is mingled
With the sweet odours brought.
Yet every tear bedewing
The faith-fed altar fire
May be its bright renewing
To purer flame, and higher.
But when the oil of gladness
God graciously outpours,
The heavenward blaze, with blended praise,
More mightily upsoars.

From "The Ministry of Intercession,"
by F. R. HAVERGAL.

"My own thoughts were much dwelling on our dear Lord's sufferings for us, not His physical sufferings for us, not His physical anguish, but on the text, 'He made Him to *be* sin for us,' and I thought what it must have been to One who had lived a life of purity and perfection as a man for thirty-three years, and Whose abhorrence of sin was far beyond anything that we can imagine, to feel all at once that every abomination that had ever been committed belonged to Him, and that He must bear the penalty, and that these sins belonged to Him and clung to Him just as though He had done them Himself, and that God, whose purity will not let Him even look upon sin, had forsaken Him. Hell is banishment from God's presence, and Christ felt all that because He was *made sin.* It was all for us wonderful love and condescension . . . my heart was very full."—*Extract from a letter.*

II.

MARY HALL.[1]

BORN 1787. DIED 1871.

OF MARY TEVERELL'S early life we hear but little. We are told that she had a mind capable of high cultivation, and that she so exercised her powers as to obtain the character of being the "cleverest girl in Worcester." She had "a thirst for knowledge which was never satisfied, a love of literature which increased with increasing years, and a delight in Nature which inspired [others] with her own enthusiasm."

In 1804, when Mary was not yet seventeen, there occurred an event trivial in itself, but important in its bearing on her whole future life. One evening, while at chapel with her mother, all unconsciously she attracted the attention of a stranger, a young man who had lately taken a business in the city. We must allow John Vine Hall to give his own account of this attraction, which soon grew into a mutual attachment. He writes:—

"The second Sunday of our attendance [at the chapel] I was particularly struck with the serious deportment of a young lady who sat opposite to myself. When my eyes were not fixed on the preacher they came in con-

[1] We are indebted to members of Mary Hall's family for permitting us to compile this short notice of their mother from "The Autobiography of John Vine Hall" (J. Nisbet & Co.), and from the funeral sermons, entitled "Garlands for a Mother's Grave."

tact with hers. I found that, similarly to myself, this young person was accompanied by an elderly lady who appeared to be her mother, and the thought struck me that she might be a widow blessed with a dutiful daughter. This thought was too much in unison with the vivacity of my imagination to die away. I watched them out of the chapel, the elderly lady leaning on the arm of the younger; but, as they were utter strangers, I had to wait the tedious approach of another Sabbath, when the same scene was renewed, and my hopes and fears were again excited."

He adds: "I now made up my mind that if this young lady should prove to be a person of good character, I would make an attempt to gain her affections, and trust to Providence for the result. But I knew neither her name nor residence."

A few weeks later the name and residence were discovered, and a good introduction having been obtained, Vine Hall "was admitted a visitor at Ivy House, St. John's, the only house he thought of any consequence in the county of Worcester."

For a time everything went on favourably, and he succeeded in gaining the affections of the object of his choice. After a while, however, her father placed obstacles in the way of their intercourse. "But," says Vine Hall, "my affection was too deeply rooted to be extinguished, and the prospect of happiness too bright to be given up for trifles. My character was unimpeachable as to integrity and industry, and my natural ardour was not to be damped by a few heavy clouds. I agreed to wait, but never to give up. I could not do it. It was against all reason, and against my nature, and therefore I stood as firm as Ajax."

This trial fretted the impetuous lover, and he sought

by his own strong will to overcome the obstacles in the way, but for a time all was in vain.

While her future husband was forbidden to visit her, Mary Teverill was torn by conflicting feelings. Her heart was bound to him to whom it had been given, and she felt it was impossible to resign him. On the other hand, she would not disobey her parents, and endeavoured to wait patiently; but the strain was too heavy for her, and her health became seriously threatened. Finally, full consent was given, and the marriage was solemnized at St. Clement's Church, Worcester, on the 26th August, 1806.

Mary Hall was but nineteen at this time, and from her own account it does not seem that she considered herself a true Christian till six years later. Probably the trials of her early married life caused her pre-eminently to feel the need of a helping Hand stronger than the loved human hand linked in hers.

Were it not that John Vine Hall has nobly told the story of his early life in order that others might gain hope through hearing of his falls, and of the victory which was eventually given him, we should not lift the veil. Now, by alluding to his failures, we are able to show forth, as he delighted to do, the help and support which his wife gave to him in his days of sorrow and distress. The soldier who supported and sometimes carried his wounded comrade along the march from the battlefield to a place of rest and safety, was not more noble nor more brave than this faithful wife.

Her best beloved had been wounded by an enemy, and she, his youthful wife, shielded and succoured him, till, all his wounds being healed, he arose to take his place by her side as a true helpmeet to her, and a valiant soldier of the cross.

Young Hall was of a lively and affectionate temperament, with fine musical powers and much native wit, and able to tell a story well; and it was probably the love of social pleasures which led him in very early life to indulge too freely in wine, which, with other stimulating beverages, was then considered as an indispensable adjunct to hospitality.

On going to reside at Worcester, he found that the bookselling business which he had taken, though formerly a thriving concern, would require all his energy to make it remunerative. Realizing that his habits were incompatible with such a result, he made a great effort and almost entirely gave up the use of alcoholic drinks, at the same time cutting himself off from social enjoyments such as might lead to his being again entangled in the snare. When his mother had left him, and when for a season which no doubt seemed interminable he was shut out from the home of his *fiancée*, his desolation was such that he again sought society, and with it returned to the wine-cup.

The old habit reasserted its power, and even after his marriage he found it impossible to shake it off while continuing to take that which kept the taste alive. There were no agencies then for protecting those who wished to overcome the appetite for strong drink.

For some years the terrible desire to drink to excess returned again and again, sometimes aroused by the so-called hospitality of friends, sometimes coming at regular intervals with little apparent cause. In his diary John Vine Hall gives vivid descriptions of his fearful falls, and of his remorse and agonizing prayers for help in his distress.

In 1812 a ray of hope pierced the dark cloud. It was on March 14th, her husband's birthday, that Mary Hall

was feeling that unless some marvellous display of Divine power should interpose in their extremity, ruin was at hand. She therefore prayed with more than usual fervour for help, and went out to attend to some domestic matters. During her absence her husband went into his shop, and there feeling fretted with everything, he said to himself, "with petulance,"—"Aye, aye; it's no use my endeavouring to become steady. My sins are too great to be forgiven."

Instantly a still small voice sounded in his ear, "If thou wilt *forsake* thy sins, they shall be forgiven thee." So tenderly were the words spoken, that passion was in a moment subdued and tears flowed freely. The heart was entirely melted, and Vine Hall rushed upstairs to pour out his tears and his prayers before God in heartfelt contrition of soul. He writes on that day:—

"I never knew (to my shame) what it was to pray with the heart till now. I felt quite a new creature, and thus I trust that my birthday may become a day of earthly and eternal joy."

What a revulsion of feeling must the wife have experienced on her return.

Now in his right mind, Vine Hall delighted in the services of the sanctuary; in the prayer meeting and the class he sometimes took vocal part, in all sincerity acknowledging the mercy which had restored him, and calling on others to come to repentance. But again and again, after the greatest enjoyment in such exercises, the poor wife had the pain of witnessing a terrible relapse, and days and weeks of anguish would be the portion of both.

All honour is due to the brotherly kindness of the Methodists of Worcester, who received again and again the returning backslider, and it was well for him that

he was willing to throw himself upon the sympathy of these brethren instead of going as many do under such circumstances to worship amongst strangers.

In 1812, after one of the many relapses, he writes :—

"*July 6th.*—Quarterly meeting. The brethren were all glad to see me amongst them again, although so unworthy. How brotherly is this regard for the welfare of each other's souls. . . . Oh that I had not grieved them!"

In October of the same year there is this record in the diary :—

"My poor M—— is incessantly kind, though she is very unwell through my misconduct. What a contrast, and how despicable does it make me appear!—but I do hope that even yet I shall not only return to the blessed Jesus, but unto my Mary also. Oh that my Saviour would draw me so close to Him that I could never depart again."

Still, in spite of these desires, he seems to have gone on for a time sinning and repenting, but of all these years till the end of the trial, Vine Hall could give this testimony of his wife, that she "had faithfully and tenderly watched over him, and instead of uttering reproaches only reproached him by her tears, and still encouraged him not to despair, as she considered that he was sincerely desirous to conquer his besetting sin."

In the beginning of 1816 the sorrows of this household seemed to have reached a climax, and Vine Hall had a severe attack of bilious fever, brought on by his intemperate habits. From the very depths of mental distress and bodily anguish, he cried to the Lord, saying :—

"What profit is there in my blood—shall the dead praise Thee? O Lord, let me live for Christ's sake, and let it be seen that Thine arm is not shortened, that it

cannot save. Oh save me, vile as I have been, that even yet I may live to Thy glory as a monument of Thy mercy."

After his recovery he was so determined to overcome his besetment, that he even thought of proposing to be placed under confinement where he might "live on bread and water all the days of his life, if only he could be preserved from sinning against God."

While he was thus pondering over his unhappy condition, his wife and a kind friend, Mr. M——, were consulting with a physician, Dr. Day, who gave great hopes that the use of medicines would help the poor sufferer. They were at a loss to know how to tell him of their deliberations, and how to obtain his consent to their plans, little knowing what preparation was going on in his mind.

On the 1st of March, 1816, "the ever-to-be-remembered day," as Vine Hall designates it, Mr. M—— called upon him. After deploring his "sad, sinful, ungrateful conduct," he said to his friend :—

"I wonder whether Dr. Day could possibly point out any plan of relief." His wife and Mr. M—— looked at one another in astonishment, and she exclaimed, "The hand of God is certainly in this thing." The sense of the tenderness of those who were seeking to help, as well as the kind commiseration of Dr. Day, assisted in raising the poor fellow from the despair into which he had well-nigh fallen, and he began to take the steel medicine which was prescribed, and to leave off spirits, using only "a very little small beer or porter." Health and strength were renewed, and feeling "his mountain to stand strong," Vine Hall tells us that he became lifted up with pride, a likely prelude to the fall which followed.

Still the doctor encouraged the hope that something

had been gained, and recommended perseverance in the means used.

In the following May more falls brought anxiety to the stricken heart of the wife, who besides having to take thought for her husband, had several children to claim her tender care. During this month another son arrived, to bring little joy with him, for five days after his birth the father was again overcome by the terrible craving. Happily the Doctor still treated the appetite as a disease, and this, with the anxiety for help shown by the sufferer himself, disarmed many, who now manifested for him pity instead of disgust and anger.

Mary Hall writes in her diary, fourteen days before the birth of her little boy:—

"*May 8th*, 1816.—The clouds seem to gather, and that too at a time ill calculated to support affliction. I know my times are in His hand. I feel that God will not willingly afflict me. Lord, I resign my all to Thee. Do with me as Thou wilt; only hide not Thy face from me. Be with me in the furnace, and enable me from the heart to say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done!'"

Again on May 9th.—"I trusted in Him, and He has delivered me. Oh what mercy! Oh that I may live in constant dependence on Him! Gracious Lord! accept my worthless heart! I would be Thine! Thou knowest I would! Be Thou my portion, my all and in all!"

Two months later she writes:—

"*July*, 1816.—Once more a gracious God permits me to raise my Ebenezer! On the 22nd May I was delivered of a fine healthy boy, who was this day baptized. Oh that the Lord may indeed baptize him with the Holy Ghost and with fire! I trust I have been enabled to offer him to the Lord, and ardently to desire that he may be a child of God. I feel too, very anxious for

grace to bring him and my other children up for the Lord. Oh that my feeble cries may be heard and answered!"

Christmas Day, 1816, was a day of hope, of which Vine Hall writes:—

"We were all sitting round the fire, my wife on one side and myself on the other, with our four healthy boys playing between us, and ourselves enjoying such serenity of happiness springing from the mercy of our God, that the prospect of future bliss and the high enjoyment of present comfort quite overpowered our feelings, and with hearts lifted up in fervent gratitude to the Author of our blessings, we sang, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,' and we sang it with the heart full in tune, whilst tears of unspeakable delight rolled down in sympathy with our exalted affections. It was a day of pure delight, such as we had never witnessed before, because our affections were never before so sincerely fixed on our great Redeemer. And besides all this, I had been preserved ninety-four days, without tasting even a drop of any strong liquor [by strong liquor we suppose wine and spirits are meant], and this had never before occurred since I was seventeen years of age."

Christmas Day, 1817, was a day of still greater joy, and to make the festal season still pleasanter to her husband, Mary Hall shared in his abstinence, refusing to take a drop of wine during the day. This little act of self-denial seemed to him a most kind thoughtfulness on the part of his wife.

Although now kept from taking wine and spirits, it was found that porter and even the mildest beer had the power to bring into sin.

Brighter days were, however, at hand for the anxious wife. The 19th of November, 1818, was the day of the

last fall into intemperance, for on that evening her husband solemnly decided that no alcoholic liquor should ever pass his lips. This resolve was maintained to the latest moment of his life, and now began a new era for both husband and wife. For years Mary Hall had been in constant dread of evil tidings, and often had had to pass through terrible scenes when her husband's reason had lost its balance, but she had been sustained by incessant prayer, "praying against hope." Now all the present and the future seemed bright and full of encouragement. She who had sustained her husband in the days of his weakness was henceforth his sympathizer in his unwearied labours for the salvation, body and soul, of those around.

We have seen Mary Hall as the true wife, unconscious that her wise and noble conduct had anything heroic in it, we must now give a picture of her as the mother.

Fourteen children were born to Vine and Mary Hall; of these six died in infancy, while eight survived their parents. One of her sons thus gives his remembrances of his mother's training and influence:—

"The very first thing that I can remember is sitting on my mother's knee, and learning from her lips that glorious declaration, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I can still feel her hand on my head, and see her earnest face, and hear the music of her sweet voice. The great truth which was so precious to herself she desired her children to know at least in words, from their earliest days. Could the meaning be grasped by a mere babe? Not the meaning of the letter; but oh! as expounded by the voice and the look and the manner of a mother so loving the Saviour, to whom indeed Christ was 'all,'

this produced an impression deeper than dialectics, more lasting than logic. As I grew up, everything seemed to throw light upon this truth, and to receive light from it. My mother loved me, and she loved God, and God loved us both, and ought I not to love Him? My mother loved me—oh how tenderly! I knew I was precious to her. But God loved His Son; yet God gave His Son for me! how much, then, must God love me. There was some mysterious danger to be shunned, some wonderful benefit to be obtained, and Jesus died for me that I might escape the one and find the other. Should I not then trust that Jesus, shun that danger, and seek that salvation?

"This earliest incident in the records of my memory illustrates how, in my mother's desires for and training of her children, Christ was all. There was nothing she so desired for us as the possession of true religion. There was nothing for which she so laboured and for which she so earnestly prayed. We all felt that the chief longing of both our parents for us all was, not that we might be rich, but that we might be good; not that we might be learned in the wisdom of this world, but that we might possess the fear of the Lord. I do not say that our parents were without ambition for us—especially our mother—but that every other consideration was subordinate to this one. Truly in reference to the conversion of her children she might say, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.'

"How often, as a child, I have stood at her chamber door after she had entered it alone and turned the key, and yet was engaged in what seemed earnest conversation when no one but herself was there! How I used to wonder at her growing fervour, she all unconscious that any overheard her but God! How the earnestness

became an impassioned appeal as to One from whom she sought some indispensable boon, and would take no denial! And then with what emotion would I hear my own name and those of my brothers and sisters, and blessings invoked upon us! And so I got to know that her heart was bent on my conversion, and that it was for this she spent so much time and energy in prayer. And loving her as I did with an ardour that was a passion even from childhood, I often thought, 'Whatever this conversion means, I would give the world to possess it, for this would make my mother happier than anything else. . . .

"My mother's earnestness never presented religion to us in a repulsive form. It was, as exhibited in her, always bright and alluring. I well remember how great a joy it was on Sunday evenings, when she would absent herself from public worship to spend the time with us children. I seem to see her finger pointing to the pictures in a book of Biblical illustrations, and explaining to us their meaning; and I possess the very copy of Pilgrim's Progress, an old edition of 1760, with her mother's name on the title-page, and abounding in most marvellous engravings, from which she used to read to us of the city of Destruction, and the wicket gate, and the house of the Interpreter, and the palace Beautiful, and the Delectable Mountains, and the passage through the river, and the golden city!

"As I grew older she took me every morning into her room, and taught me a verse of the Proverbs; and then, as we knelt together at her bedside, she would implore for me the gift of Divine grace. And so she watched over, and counselled and prayed for all her children, till one by one it was her happiness to hope for them all that they had chosen the way of life.

"But it must not be supposed that while religion was her chief, it was her only interest. Far otherwise. . . . She alone became to us more than all other companions and amusements. She read with a beauty of expression and a dramatic power, which I never heard surpassed except by professed elocutionists, but with a simple naturalness which is seldom found in such combination. Thus when we gathered round her in the evenings as she read to us poetry, or history, or works of fiction, the very events seemed enacted before us, and the various characters spoke for themselves. Thus it was, that if she warned us against the dangerous amusements of the world, she made home so attractive that the outside world had no chance in the competition.

"Her charity began at home, but did not end there. She was diligent in seeking out the sick and the poor in their squalid abodes. Often have I trudged by her side when on these errands she would carry a basket with some little comforts, and then would read and pray with the sufferers. There was one poor old woman who could not read a letter, and whom she instructed patiently till she was able to read the gospel of John; and how proud I was in being allowed sometimes to take her place as teacher of the ancient pupil, whose delight as she puzzled out a new verse, and whose gratitude, knew no bounds.

"It was always the joy of my parents to consider their house the Minister's home. All who came to preach were expected to take up their quarters, as a matter of course, in the Prophet's chamber. I find by some memoranda in the old Family Bible, that amongst many others, Rowland Hill was several times my mother's guest. How well I remember the loving zeal with which she made hospitable preparations for mis-

sionary and other anniversaries, what a delight it was to her to have the ample table surrounded by ministers of the Gospel, and how the humblest were welcomed in turn with the most distinguished for their Master and their work's sake."

In reference to the pleasure of entertaining the Lord's servants Mary Hall writes in her diary:—

"*July*, 1823.—I feel unspeakably thankful to God for His great mercy in giving to my dear husband a heart and a home to receive the ministers of the gospel. How many great enjoyments have we had in consequence! Oh, what a privilege! My dear children, should you ever see this book, let me urge you to support the cause of God; to love and honour His faithful servants, and to feel any ability to do them good for Christ's sake, your great privilege."

Her humility is seen in the following passage written for her children, who had never been conscious that their mother possessed a quick temper, so fully had it been controlled.

"*Sept. 11th*, 1829.—If my children recollect circumstances in their mother's conduct which once made them doubt the sincerity of her religious profession, let them here see that she hated herself for sin, that she did not *allow* it; she wept over it, strove against it, and cast herself as a poor miserable sinner on the atonement of Christ who died for such—and oh, my children, let not my inconsistencies deter you from the path I have so often directed you to! There is no safety, no peace in any other; and though from innate depravity, a naturally bad temper, and nerves shaken by continual indisposition, I have made such low attainments in the Christian life, yet I am persuaded of the excellence and beauty of religion. I would not give up my hope for a

thousand worlds—Christ is mine—and when this life closes, and my sins shall die with this vile body, then, with renewed powers, with holy raptures and unmixed delight, I shall mingle with the joyful throng around the throne! My children, I charge you to meet me there!

"MARY HALL."

In 1839, she speaks of her prayerful solicitude for a son who was now leaving home and going to sea:—

"This day, my dear A—— has left the parental roof for a sailor's life. Oh, the agony I have endured in parting with him! I have been enabled to commit him to the care of my gracious Lord, Who has ever been a prayer-hearing, promise-keeping God! May His guardian care be over this beloved child! My heart sinks when I think that my care over this dear child ceases. He must now be in the world, far from his mother's eye and his mother's restraint. My God! be Thou his Protector, his Adviser, his Help!"

No entry follows in the journal during the next twenty years, and then comes a postscript to the foregoing:—

"Wonders of grace to God belong! A——, referred to above, brought by Divine grace and matchless love to be a Christian, and a Christian Minister! and in July, 1859, twenty years after the above was written, was chosen pastor of an Independent Church at Luddenden Foot, near Halifax. Bless the Lord! Praise the Lord! Who is a pardoning, prayer-hearing God like unto ours?"

In the husband's copious journal he continually brings in the name of the faithful wife who shared so intensely in all his interests. The anniversaries of her

birthday, and of the day on which he first spoke to her, and of their wedding day, are remembered with expressions of devout thanksgiving. During the years following his restoration, Vine Hall often needed the soothing of her strong faith and trustful words, when painful recollections would come in like a flood.

One day he mentions that his wife and son, "quite scold him for mourning so much on account of his past sins." Again in 1857 he says:—

"My heart bowed down with sorrow on account of my past sins. My dear Mary and others of my family think me wrong in not rejoicing in deliverance. But I cannot forget my former depravity." And yet again, he says, "I cannot review the mercy of God in His precious gift of such a wife without feelings of the most intense gratitude. To me who deserves the utmost indignation of the Lord, has He given the greatest treasure on earth."

After many years of this close union Mary Hall was taken very ill. Her husband says that "his love and reverence for his Lord led him to leave the whole direction of his concerns in His hands," and though bowed with grief, he did not feel able to ask for her life. She had, as he thought, given him her parting word, and the physician's report was that she had only ten minutes to live, when it was impressed upon his heart that He who knew his faith and love was willing that he should now make use of the promise "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do." In an intensity of agony he cried to the Lord for the life so unspeakably precious to him, and the answer was given. As the doctors were watching, as they thought, her expiring breath, she revived, and in due time was entirely restored to health.

After leaving Worcester, John Vine Hall settled at Maidstone, where a large portion of his after life was

spent and where he and his wife joined an Independent Church in which he filled the office of deacon.

They afterwards removed to the neighbourhood of London, and in 1854 took possession of a new residence, Heath Cottage, Kentish Town, where they remained until Vine Hall's death in 1860. When entering this dwelling they consecrated it and themselves to their Heavenly Father with thanksgiving and prayer. Four sons joined them at their evening meal, and together parents and children united in singing a psalm of praise. That home and all their homes often resounded with sacred songs, for the musical powers which had made Vine Hall so attractive in earlier days were now consecrated by him to higher themes.

Although the children were scattered, the parents had so many united interests and occupations, that there was little danger of their feeling lonely. The time was divided between Bible-readings at home, in which husband and wife both delighted, work connected with the church, and meetings of various kinds, in some of which Vine Hall gave Gospel Temperance addresses. Then there were visits to their children, excursions into the country, sometimes a day's outing joined by some of their children, or more distant journeys taken by themselves. On all these occasions it was a great interest to scatter tracts, especially "The Sinner's Friend," a little book written by John Vine Hall (one chapter being added by his wife). This pamphlet was translated into many languages and distributed over the world by hundreds of thousands. It was an often recurring joy to the writers to know that it was the means of the conversion of many sinners.

After he had attained his eighty-sixth birthday, John Vine Hall was still vigorous and active. On the 22nd

of May, 1860, he enjoyed a family excursion to Leith Hill. He was the life of the party. On getting into the van in the evening the steps slipped, he lost his footing, and an injury to the leg was the result. At first his health did not seem affected, but the prolonged confinement, to one of his very active habits, at last told upon him. His strength gave way, and in September it was evident that the end was approaching. It was a great comfort to him that all through this time of physical weakness his wife was in health and able to wait upon him.

Till June 25th he wrote his daily record. The one on that day contains the last of the numberless entries concerning her who constituted, next to his Saviour, the highest joy of his life :—

"My beloved Mary so active, so kind, so full of health, praise the Lord."

During the last days, when articulation had nearly failed, her name and the name of Jesus were almost the only words he uttered. On the 22nd of September the parting moment arrived, and she was left alone—yet not alone.

In a note to her, found after his departure, she read these words :—

"Grieve not, dearest, that your ever tenderly loved husband is taken from you, only to be *restored* in the Lord's time, but rather *rejoice* that his soul is relieved from its tenement of clay, to be for *ever* with the Lord. Yes, for *ever* with the *Lord.* I hope there may be no presumption in this assertion, nothing rash, irreverent or bold—nothing unbecoming a poor redeemed sinner, in whose heart the Lord Jesus has held occupation so many years—ever a *welcome* Guest—always the *delight* of my life, the *joy* of my soul. Our blessed and merci-

ful God will never leave you, never forsake you. We have *proved* and experienced His faithfulness.

"As my soul has long mourned over my sin with deep repentance, my God has forgiven it too; but I have never forgiven *myself*, nor have I ceased to feel the deepest sorrow. But God be praised, 'the precious blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin'—yes, even from *my* sins, crimson as they are. And, oh, what special mercy that I have long been delivered from all fear as to the article of *death* or the *act* of dying. Whether my body expire in agony, or in peace and gentleness, I know the Lord will give me dying grace, and I wish to know no other will than His."

Much as we must deplore such sins, the remembrance of which shaded Vine Hall's entire life, we must never forget that there are others which, though less repulsive to man, are equally offensive in the sight of God and equally dishonouring to His holy name and the name of His adorable Son.

What joy must have filled the heart of the aged widow, even in her sorrow, in the remembrance that she had stood by him during all those fifty-four years, loving and shielding him when others scorned him. What thankfulness, too, she must have felt that now she was the one to bear the loneliness instead of him, who for long years had deemed nothing in his life complete which she did not personally share with him.

Reverently we glance back over her mission, and we feel that words are inadequate to express the blessedness and vastness of such a ministry as Mary Hall's; but now that she was left alone it would have been contrary to her nature to sit down and think that her work in the world was all accomplished. She had still around her children and grandchildren to whom she was

very precious. In younger life, as we have seen, she had loved to visit and minister to the sick and aged, and now, after removing to the home of her son A—— at Edmonton, she occupied herself in visiting the sick poor of his congregation. December 31st, 1860, she writes in her journal of the great change which had come into her life:—

"A long, long pause. Greatly have circumstances changed since I last wrote. Now I have no one to claim my time. The last few years I have had my time much engaged in reading to my beloved husband and devoting myself to him. On the 22nd September last he entered into the joy of his Lord. The Lord did not forsake the work of His own hands, and He has now perfected that which concerned him. I have for a short time lost the presence of my friend, my loved companion, my dear, dear husband; but he is only gone a little before me. We shall soon meet again. For twenty years I have been in the habit of reading the Scriptures to my beloved husband, and we thus read the historical and prophetical books twenty times; the book of Psalms, sixty; the New Testament thirty-six times. Illness stopped this privilege in the summer of 1860. He whom I had so long and so tenderly loved has been summoned from earthly privileges to heavenly enjoyments, from the shadow to the substance! Since then my reading has been alone. This day, December 31st, 1860, I have finished the three divisions of the Bible, and if spared to see another year hope to begin again; and though no more having my dear one to listen to me and to comment upon the sacred words, may I be enabled to read it with diligence and prayerfulness, with deep reverence, seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit for light and instruction; and may I be

enabled so to pray and read that Jesus may be more exceedingly precious to my soul. May my few remaining days be more devoted to God, and may the tender love I bore to my husband be transferred to that merciful Saviour who has so long borne with my divided heart. Lord help Thy poor servant! Be the God of the widow! Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings! Oh, take away the fear of death, and enable me to look forward with joyful hope of being absent from the body and present with the Lord. Amen."

The last entry is dated, March 5th, 1865.

"Though I must expect infirmities, I know that my Jesus will never leave me nor forsake me, but will hold me up in weakness and old age; and at length receive me into that heaven which He died to purchase 'even *for me*'; and where He is gone to prepare a place, 'even *for me*.' Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Till over eighty years of age Mary Hall continued to rise at five o'clock summer and winter, devoting the early hours to reading the Bible and other religious books, and prayer. Her prayers for her children and grandchildren were unwearied. When her son was from home "she conducted family worship, offering extempore prayer with great fervour, reverence, and beauty of expression." Her memory continued good till near the close of her life, and she could repeat without hesitation one hundred hymns and many long passages of Scripture. She and her husband had been accustomed to repeat hymns to one another.

To the last her heart was much with the husband of her youth. One day during an illness, she said, touching her departure:—

"How I shall search over the shining banks to look for him among the rest. He will be prominent among

them looking for me. He has been long enough at the court of heaven to have court manners by this time. Wonderful that I have not been permitted to see him all this time! I used to lie in bed at Llandudno, watching the tops of the hills as if he would surely come in sight and beckon me. How I have watched to see him, but he did not come!"

In 1871 she went on a visit to St. Leonard's, and there she was visited by most of her children and grandchildren. It was a happy time to all. One evening she repeated the hymn,—

> "There is a house not made with hands,
> Eternal and on high
> And here my spirit waiting stands,
> Till God shall bid it fly," etc.

Then she exclaimed, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly and take Thy servant home!" A friend said "But do you want to leave us?" She replied, "I love you all, but Jesus is more to me now, and I know my children will all follow me, and join me in heaven, for I have prayed for them, and I believe in prayer."

It was while at St. Leonard's that the summons was given. Sudden powerlessness came on, her speech failed, and after a few days of prostration the redeemed spirit passed from earth. Five of her children were ministering to her to the end.

A minister who knew and loved her gives this testimony to her consistent life and character:—

"She was a noble woman, and a mother whom all her children pronounce blessed. Her name and memory will ever be held sacred in the circle in which she was known, and especially in her own family. In person, in mind, in heart, in character, she was above the

ordinary type of woman. Those who ever met her were not likely to forget her. And all that was best and brightest she owed to her Saviour. She is gone to Jesus, and has seen Him in whom her soul had long rejoiced."

All that was mortal of Mary Hall was reverently and lovingly laid by the side of her husband, in Abney Park Cemetery, London, by her sorrowing yet rejoicing children and grandchildren, "in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

WATCHING UNTO PRAYER.

MARY BOYLES BROWNE.

Source of my life's refreshing springs,
Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

ANNA LETITIA WARING.

"All the faithful are not called to the public ministry; but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various; but whenever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ, it is from the operation of His Spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them, and then giving them a just sense of the conditions of others. This truth was early fixed on my mind, and I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words of worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of true Gospel ministry."—*From John Woolman's Journal.*

III.

MARY BOYLES BROWNE.

BORN, 1794. DIED, 1880.

MARY BOYLES BROWNE was born at Norwich, on the 3rd of January, 1794.

Her father was connected, at some time or other, both with the army and navy, and latterly held the post of lay-clerk in the Norwich Cathedral, in which one of his brothers was a minor canon. This brother, who was the Rector of St. Giles', Norwich, was father to the well-known writer, "Charlotte Elizabeth." The brothers had married sisters, so that the families were closely connected, and Mary Browne and her two sisters were the playmates and companions of "Charlotte Elizabeth" and her only brother.

The characters of Mary Boyles Browne and Charlotte Elizabeth Browne[1] had points of strong resemblance. Both had great strength of will, both were very decided in their views, and both carried out their convictions at the cost of much personal sacrifice. Their paths diverged, but the love and interest in one another remained, and Mary Browne used to speak with pleasure of her cousin, and also of her acquaintance with some of her protegées.

[1] For a sketch of the life of C. E. Tonna (*née* Browne) see "Consecrated Women," First Series. Hodder and Stoughton.

Little is known of Mary Browne's childhood and youth, except two incidents bearing upon her religious life. The first occurred when she was five years old. One day she was sitting in a room, when there came to her such a sense of heavenly light diffused all around, that the impression of its loveliness never left her. She even spoke of its bright remembrance during her last illness. The other circumstance occurred some years later, probably when she was about fifteen. While reading one of Sir Walter Scott's novels, she felt an intimation that she was to close the book. She obeyed the impression, and never after allowed herself to read works of fiction. In thus acting up to what she believed to be right for *her*, she gained much in several ways.

The time redeemed from such reading was given to mental improvement; and the habits of study thus formed were invaluable to Mary Browne in after life, when she suffered from deafness and was totally unable to hear conversation except through a tube, and when reading of a solid character was an unfailing resource to her. She had a vivid imagination, and felt that adherence to the resolution thus early formed was a help to her mentally as well as spiritually throughout her life.

She was fond of linguistic studies and history, and found recreation in the study of astronomy, meteorology, physical geography and kindred subjects.

Some time after the last recorded incident, Mary Browne felt earnest longings after a close walk with God. This longing led her to frequent the services held in a church at Norwich, where a good and eloquent clergyman attracted large audiences. She was also diligent in the observance of the outward rites of religion as practised in the Church of England. She often

mentioned the care with which she used the week's preparation before partaking of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and of her bitter disappointment time after time in not realizing the presence of the Lord on those occasions. Again and again she returned from this service, to weep in secret, with unsatisfied hunger after the Bread of Life. It was evidently the Lord's will that she should not look for the enjoyment of communion only at stated times, but should partake of it, as she afterwards did, moment by moment, in a continual feeding which nourished her soul unto everlasting life.

While thus longing for something she could not find, she sought for satisfaction in other Churches beside her own. Like many of her contemporaries she was attracted by the teaching of Edward Irving, and wrote to consult him about her spiritual interests. Her letter must have interested him deeply, for he went to Norwich to converse with her; but the intercourse resulted in Mary Browne's feeling that his views were not such as to bring her full help and strength.

Afterwards she was led to attend the meetings of the Society of Friends in Norwich, and finding in them the opportunity for that spiritual fellowship and worship after which she longed, she united herself with that body in 1835. In connection with her acceptance of the spiritual views held by the "Friends," she felt it right to take up the practice of "plainness" in dress and language then in common use by the most earnest-minded amongst them. She never regretted this step, and always wore the simple dress of a "plain Friend," and used the Scriptural and classic "thee" and "thou"; but although fully persuaded of her path in these matters, she did not press her views upon others. At the time, these changes involved much suffering,

because it was intolerable to her family for her to be so peculiar. It was not till long afterwards that her mother became in measure reconciled to her daughter's union with another Church.

In passing we may remark that the dress formerly so much worn by the women of the Society of Friends (and still retained by some), was not used as a mark of asceticism, since they never shut themselves out from family or social duties. At the rise of the Society, the women, being awakened to the deep importance of self-denial as a fruit of the renewed nature, laid aside their ornaments and superfluous trimmings. As they only changed the make and mode of their apparel as convenience required, unconsciously there came to be a large degree of uniformity in their costume. In the experience of many of these devoted women it was a great saving of thought and time to be delivered from much anxiety about the varying fashions. There was also a repose to those around in the quiet dress which kept the wearer so unchanged from year to year. The dress which was in vogue at the time Mary Browne joined the Society was probably, in a modified form, that usually worn towards the close of last century. It was the same style of dress that was then still maintained by the elder women among the Wesleyans. The "plain language" of the "Friends" was that used by equals to one another and by superiors to inferiors in the 17th century. The language now in common use was then the language of flattery, and therefore not available for a People who sought to be absolutely truthful.

In the building up of the noblest Christian characters there are generally tests appointed or permitted, by which the sincere-hearted may show the reality of their

faith and love. We see continually that the Holy Spirit makes use of the circumstances around an individual, and adapts them to the furtherance of his spiritual development. There are many things in the life of each Christian which, while expedient or inexpedient for himself, cannot be judged by any fixed standard of right or wrong.

After the marriage of her two sisters, Mary Browne was left the sole companion of her beloved parents, to whom she ministered during their declining years.

She was an earnest worker among the poor, but her sympathies seem to have gone out especially towards the Hebrew nation, for whose spiritual welfare she laboured in connection with the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. Her descriptions of her repeated visits to Mr. Alexander, an Israelite, who afterwards became Bishop of Jerusalem, were most interesting. His mind was opening to the truths of Christianity, and Mary Browne, in company with another lady, used to encourage him in his first steps as a follower of the Crucified One. They deeply sympathized with him in the violent opposition of his wife, and great was their joy when, after months of mental suffering, he told them that *her* heart also was turning towards the truth as it is in Jesus.

The circle into which Mary Browne was introduced when she threw in her lot with the "Friends" was one characterized by deep spirituality and intellectual refinement. Joseph John Gurney and his wife, Elizabeth Fry, William and Anna Forster, Lucy Birkbeck and many others were much beloved by her. In her old age her heart went forth to the younger generations of these circles, who responded warmly to her affection. She would often talk of the past, and tell incidents connected

with her Norwich life. But though she loved to dwell upon bygone years, it never was at the expense of present associations. In her last illness she described herself as having been one of a band of seekers numbering about forty, belonging to different Churches, who had, in unison of spirit, sought to follow their Lord and Saviour very closely. Probably it was after she joined the Society of Friends that she specially enjoyed this communion of spirit, for she was then settled in Christian faith, and her heart was ever open to all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. She much admired the character of Bishop Stanley, and warmly appreciated his endeavours to unite Christians of different denominations in social religious fellowship.

We do not know at what date she first vocally confessed her Lord in the meetings of Friends. It was in 1846 that her name was placed on the records of Norwich Monthly Meeting as a minister of the Society. Previously she had gone as the companion of Sarah Harris, of Bradford, on a missionary visit to Holland, Germany, and France. Mary Browne was a good French scholar, and it seems probable that her intimacy with some religious persons in France may have dated from this visit.

Among the few journeys taken by her on Gospel service was one to Scotland in 1861. She was then associated with two Friends from Brighton, and their union in this mission led to a warm friendship and a close fellowship in religious and other interests.

In the Society of Friends those who exercise the ministry of the word are expected to seek not only for direct guidance as to the subject to bring before their hearers, but also as to the time for speaking in their meetings, so that no speaker may interfere with the

service of another; because the Divine Spirit, to whom they profess to look for guidance, is not the author of confusion but of order. The ground of the ministry being of such a character, the women who are really baptized for this work are often more retiring than many others of their sex. They realize the great responsibility of their mission, and that it is not they who speak the message, but that they are dependent on the Holy Ghost to be to them tongue and utterance.

Mary Browne's vocal ministry in the meetings of her people was characterized by great clearness, especially in exposition of doctrine. She seldom spoke without alluding to the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the sanctifying power of the Spirit. She sought herself to follow fully a crucified and risen Lord, and she invited others to enter into the same blessed experience. Owing to her inability to hear her own words, her voice was unequal; sometimes rising to a high, clear key, and then falling almost to a whisper. But this can hardly be said to have lessened the force of her ministry, which, while very acceptable to those who had long known her, was particularly valued by such as had only recently joined the Society. These felt the depth and reality of her experience, and accepted her words as very helpful to them.

Probably it was this reality that gave her such influence. Sometimes she may have been too outspoken in ordinary intercourse; but all who knew her intimately, felt that it was the truthfulness and sincerity of her character which led her freely to express her feelings.

In her conversation she manifested a deep travail of soul on behalf of those around her. In the silent watches of the night her voice was sometimes heard ascending in solemn tones, pleading, as we may believe, for the

souls of these. Probably she did not realize that the sound could reach beyond her chamber, and those who heard, delicately forbore to listen to such sacred communings between her soul and her God and Father.

As she advanced in life, Mary Browne found her native county too cold for her permanent residence, and for several years she annually visited some dear friends in Cornwall during the winter months; and afterwards, during the last fourteen or fifteen years of her life, to avoid the fatigue of the long western journey, she generally passed the winters in Brighton. Her visits to Cornwall led to much pleasant intercourse with many new friends, and her already large circle became widened.

On the settlement of her widowed sister, Anne Carter, at Guildford, Surrey, she spent a portion of the summer months in that pleasant country town, until the death of this beloved relative. Her ministry in the little meeting, and her affectionate interest in the "Friends" there, were much valued.

Thus accustomed to go from place to place, she quickly settled down into each successive home, and her quiet lodging became a centre of interest to others. Her little sitting-room invariably looked neat and homelike. She always liked to have plants in the window. She had not many things about; just her book in reading, her writing materials which were in constant use, her knitting —usually babies' shoes, which she made exquisitely, or kettle-holders in two colours, which were given as little mementoes to her friends. On the table was the tube, at hand for callers. She did not care to carry her books about with her, except her Bible, which was the book she loved above all to peruse. She could always borrow books of her friends, and she decided, by rapidly turning

over the pages, whether a book was likely to suit her or not. During one or two winters spent in Brighton, some time after she had completed her eightieth year, she borrowed volume after volume of the *Penny Encyclopædia.* She carefully read the papers on physical geography and many scientific subjects, often copying extracts which particularly interested her, and in this way she made use of the seventeen volumes. She still read French books with ease and enjoyment.

Her correspondence was large. She was very dependent upon this sort of intercourse with her friends at a distance, and found a great solace in it. Her social calls were prized, and all with whom she thus came in contact felt the largeness of her sympathies, and realized the power she had of entering into their temporal and spiritual concerns. The disposition to pensiveness which lay hidden in her character was not generally seen, and only showed itself in her intercourse with her most intimate friends.

Her affections were intense, and she felt acutely when any of those upon whom she leaned were called away from earth; and when any of her friends were ill, she entered into their sufferings with a realization almost too keen for her delicate frame. Her love of kindred was very clinging; and her relatives, younger and older, found a warm welcome to her habitation. She was particularly fond of little children, and liked to watch them and get them to talk to her through her tube. We have seen her, at the age of eighty, nursing with great pleasure a baby of a few months; and she delighted to carry her gifts of little shoes to mothers, in whose joys and sorrows she felt a tender sympathy.

Although occasionally prostrated by attacks of severe illness, Mary Browne continued very active until within

a few months of her death. She liked to go about alone, and generally did her own shopping, and it was wonderful how easily she made her way in spite of her extreme deafness. She sought the good of those who came within the circle of her influence, and her workwoman and laundress were objects of her tender thought and kind care.

Contrary to her usual custom, the winter of 1877–8 was spent at Guildford. From letters written during that time to an aged friend of hers, we insert a few extracts.

The first is dated "Twelfth month, 30th, 1877."

"This morning I received the book from M——, and mean to return it to-morrow, that some one else may be comforted by perusing it. E. B—— sent it to me last week; the similarity of L. G——'s experience with my own is striking. Our deafness outwardly, and the unceasing noise in the head, which is not quite so trying [to me] as it was to her; but the sitting in company without hearing any conversation I can remember feeling much; not so now, when I am obliged to be so much alone, and to refrain from needless speaking.

". . . I know not if I named a book I have read with interest. It comprises the account of the formation of the Moravian Society, and the bitter persecutions the early Christians in Bohemia underwent previously to the time the Moravians separated themselves. I cannot but fear that they will become a mixed people, and what a loss it will be. However, we may leave the 'little flock' to the care of the 'Good Shepherd,' who knows His sheep and will seek them out wherever they are scattered. Read Ezeziel xxxiv."

"*Fifth month, 10th,* 1878.—The winter has passed away with us both, and we are still spared. With me

it has been a time when every way seemed hedged up, not an opening to be found. Thrown so entirely upon myself, with full opportunity to meditate on the works of Him who searcheth the reins and the heart, and to consider all the way in which I have been led from early life, even from five years old, when the true Light shone around me, and how there was a wandering far away from it, though never suffered to go far without condemnation; all this increased my faith that now I might hope on, and often in much depression I found help. The physical suffering has been severe at times, but lately has been alleviated. How many are our trials into which no one can enter, yet known unto Him who cares for us, and can so wonderfully sympathize with us. . . . The yearly meeting comes very near. . . . How often have we attended in past years, and experienced strength and encouragement from the society of those loved and valued friends who have entered into an abiding rest, and how soon we also may be gathered, who can tell?

"I was at meeting on first day; it was a solemn time in silence."

"*Fifth month, 26th,* 1878.—It seemed rather long since thy last letter, so that thine received yesterday was doubly welcome. During this long detention here the kindness of my friends in frequently writing has been truly valued. My time of liberation is not yet come, and I desire patiently to wait till the way opens; it has seemed at hand several times, but something has occurred to close it again. It has been a season of peculiar trial in many ways, such as I never passed through before, and looking back almost wonder how I have been helped onwards, and just now am favoured with a peaceful calm, which compensates for many a high

gale; and I have often thought of the lines I found in a book of thine, I think in MS. :—

> 'In every high and stormy gale
> My anchor holds within the veil.'"

After her last winter at Brighton, in 1879–80, Mary Browne was able to enjoy most of her usual periodical visits to beloved friends in the neighbourhood of London. Then she went to Guildford to pass a few weeks in the large, pleasant house where she had so often lodged.

Some of the children and grandchildren of her late beloved sister rallied round her. This was a mutual pleasure; those who cherished her life did not then know that the parting was at hand. Illness came on, and the niece whom she had almost brought up, and who loved her with daughterly affection, nursed her till forced regretfully to leave her for duties which she could not delegate to another. Then the ladies of the house, who had known her for years, and the nurse who had waited upon her sister during her last illness, ministered to her, a married niece from near London coming often to see her.

In her steppings in life she had always sought Divine direction both as to time and place, and she did not doubt the guidance which led her to Guildford at this time.

Her illness was long and attended by much physical exhaustion, and she dozed a good deal; yet almost to the end she was able from time to time to write a few lines, and she liked to receive letters from her friends. She arranged all her affairs with great precision, having nearly all the articles in her possession labelled with the names of the intended recipients. Towards the end

her mind, which had wandered a little, regained its brightness. One day a friend from a distance went to see her. The invalid could not converse much, but she handed to her visitor an envelope on which with trembling hand she had written the following :—

" Une mère exhortat son fils mourant penser au Sauveur. 'Chère mère,' répondit-il, 'on pense aux absens. Mon Sauveur est toujours avec moi ! '"

This doubtless was the expression of her own blessed experience.

Again and again she testified to " the peace which passeth all understanding " being her portion. Shortly before her death, in the early morning, she called to her nurse, exclaiming, " Oh, nurse, nurse ; what beautiful singing ! what heavenly voices ! Dost thou hear ? " It was not the music of earth which had arrested her, neither was it the bodily sense which was now at last restored. It was a sweet, faint echo of the harmonies of Heaven which fell upon her spiritual ear. Already it might be said of her, in the words of the poet,

" The song which she heard was the Seraphim's song."

It was on the 9th of November, 1880 that Mary Browne quietly entered into rest, in the eighty-seventh year of her age.

A little company of loving relatives and friends gathered round her grave at the cemetery at Guildford, on the 13th of the same month. In that quiet resting-place they laid the loved form of their friend, in the glad hope of a glorious resurrection.

"CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER."

ELIZABETH, LAST DUCHESS OF GORDON.

. . . but Lord . . . concerning Thee
I know Thy bounty; where Thou givest much
Standing without, if any call Thee in
Thou givest more.

JEAN INGELOW.

"Among the elegant forms of insect life, there is a little creature known to naturalists, which can gather round it a sufficiency of atmospheric air—and, so clothed upon, it descends into the bottom of the pool, and you may see the little diver moving about dry and at his ease, protected by his crystal vesture, though the water all around and above be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector—a transparent vesture, the world sees it not—but a real defence, it keeps out the world. By means of it the believer can gather so much of heaven's atmosphere around him, and with it descend into the putrid depths of this contaminating world, that for a season no evil will touch him; and he knows where to ascend for a new supply. Communion with God kept Daniel pure in Babylon.

". . . And so far as this is a world of distress and danger, prayer is the best defence. So Daniel found it in the den. So his three friends found it in the fiery furnace. And so you, my friends, will find it in the real or fancied perils of this mortal life. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.'"—*From "The Mount of Olives." By Dr. James Hamilton.*

IV.

ELIZABETH, LAST DUCHESS OF GORDON.[1]

BORN, 1794. DIED, 1864.

ELIZABETH BRODIE was the only daughter of Alexander Brodie, of Burn, Kincardineshire, descendant of Malcolm, who was Thane of Brodie in 1249. Her mother was grand-daughter of the Earl of Wemyss, and her grandmother, Lady Betty Wemyss, belonged to the Sutherland family.

Elizabeth Brodie was left motherless at the age of six years, and was for a considerable time under the care of some maiden aunts at Elgin. She is described as a happy, mirthful child, robust in frame and vigorous in mind, extremely amiable, but possessed of a strong, resolute will. Her aunts allowed her great freedom, and the period of her childhood passed at Elgin proved a very happy time.

When about eight years old she was sent to a boarding school in London. The moral and intellectual training of the school was good, but there does not seem to have been any religious influence brought to bear upon the pupils. Her instructors took infinite pains with the little Scotch girl, trying to replace the broad accent of Fife and Elgin by the most approved

[1] This sketch is compiled from "Life and Letters of Elizabeth, Last Duchess of Gordon." By Dr. Moody Stuart. J. Nisbet & Co. By kind permission of the publishers.

English pronunciation; and for this end, while she was thoroughly educated in other respects, her memory had to be allowed to lie fallow, for everything that she learned by rote "came out Scotch instead of English." The result was a most satisfactory pronunciation but "a defect in verbal memory," which she often regretted. She had great musical talent, and when grown up she re-acquired the dialect for the sake of the Scotch songs which she delighted to play and sing. She became a proficient in French, writing and speaking it fluently. Her education included some instruction in mathematics, which was useful to her afterwards in thinking out subjects and in business matters. When about sixteen, Elizabeth Brodie left school, and spent her summers at Burn, and her winters at Bath with her father who was somewhat of an invalid.

Her education was now carried on very much by men—"wise and intelligent friends" of her father, who took a great interest in the development of his only child. To one of these, Colonel Imray, who often rode and walked with her, she owed a taste for scientific pursuits, and she never lost her interest in minerals and shells and fossils. Before she was seventeen Elizabeth Brodie came out into society at the Fife Hunt in Cupar, under the auspices of her friend Mrs. Rigg, her father's asthmatic complaint keeping him retired. She is described as a tall, graceful girl, with an intelligent countenance, full of life and "winning gentleness."

At nineteen Elizabeth Brodie entered upon a new sphere very different from the comparatively quiet life she had led with her father.

The residence of the Brodie family had been destroyed in the seventeenth century by a wild marauder of the house of Gordon, but this had not permanently

estranged the two families, and Alexander Brodie used to receive at his house visits from Jane Duchess of Gordon, on her way from Gordon Castle to London.

On one of these occasions she noticed the care bestowed upon the education of his daughter, now in her maiden prime, full of mental and physical vigour, and she said to him, "You are surely training her for a wife for Huntly." This proud leader of fashion had satisfied her worldly ambition with regard to her daughters, three of whom had married dukes.

Her only son, Lord Huntly, was at this time about forty-six years of age, tall, handsome and intelligent. He had distinguished himself during a nine years' campaign in Holland as Colonel to a Scotch regiment of recruits formed by his father's personal exertions in Scotland. He was a universal favourite, but a thorough man of the world, making "no conscience of keeping himself from its follies and sins." When he became suitor for Elizabeth Brodie's hand we do not hear that she was at all averse to his proposals, and the marriage was shortly arranged. She was, like the Marquis, wholly of the world, so that in this respect they were, as her biographer remarks, "not unequally yoked."

The marriage took place at Bath, in December, 1813. After living a few months at Southampton, they went to London in the spring, and the Marquis introduced his bride into the "gay circle of rank and fashion in which he was so popular." She took a good position there, her acquirements in Scotch music being much admired. But she did not shine in society in the same way as the ladies of the Gordon family, who fascinated all by their ease of manner. They had the power which, in a modified form, is almost a necessary part of a woman's vocation, that of throwing herself into an endless variety

of interests, turning from one thing to another with unwearied versatility. This faculty is very useful and pleasant when it proceeds from a heart-felt feeling of sympathy towards those around; but when it is merely acquired, like any other art, as a needful part of a woman's preparation to shine in society, it is a hollow thing.

The Marchioness set herself to attain this art, and in after life regretted its acquisition, because it weakened her capacity for "concentrating her mind on one subject of thought."

In the spring of 1815 Lord and Lady Huntly made a tour through Holland and Belgium before settling down in Scotland. They reached Brussels while the battle of Waterloo was raging, and Lady Huntly remained with her sister-in-law, Lady Richmond, while Lord Huntly rode to the scene of action.

Towards the winter of 1815 they reached their own home. At Huntly Lodge the Marchioness found herself surrounded with her books and other belongings which had been about her in childhood and youth, and the place had a home-feeling at once. In the summer the formal welcome was given and great festivities took place in the Castle Park. A few years later the Marquis took his wife for a tour through the Gordon estates in the Highlands, and during their progress the old custom of having fiery crosses carried at night from hill to hill was revived.

In 1819 Prince Leopold visited Lord and Lady Huntly at Kinrara Lodge in the Highlands. The clans joined the Marquis in giving him a truly Highland reception, which much delighted the Prince.

Lady Huntly's time was divided thus: the winter was spent at Huntly, the spring in London, the autumn at their hunting lodge of Kinrara. At each place mirth

and gaiety prevailed. At Kinrara, a humble friend, a servant, was troubled to see her mistress so thoughtless, and, gently and reverently, the good woman gave her a word of warning. Although it did not seem to have any effect at the time, the reproof was not forgotten.

In 1821, in London, the Marchioness seems to have been aroused by some special manifestation of the sin and wickedness which, in what is called the best society, did not care to hide itself from view.

She had been carefully trained in an atmosphere of the highest morality, and her feelings received a great shock. With her sensitive heart wounded and in pain, she turned to her Bible.

The Book seemed so new and delightful, that she went back to it again and again, till the fact of her having taken to this strange employment became known to the giddy circle in which she moved. It was something to make merry over, and the jest was kept afloat very zealously. Her associates did not imagine for a moment that she would be proof against their laughter and their taunts; they called her "Methodist," and she said to herself, "If for so little I am to be called a Methodist, let me have something more worthy of the name." Her faithful maid, Cossens, was distressed, and exclaimed with the friends of higher rank, "My Lady has turned Methodist."

Although Lady Huntly had, till now, thought but little of God, she yet looked upon Him as the One who loved her, and had bestowed upon her the good things of this life. She had scarcely any definite religious knowledge, but when, in the course of her reading, she came upon the words, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them

that ask Him?" she was much impressed by them, and began from that time to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and she did not pray in vain. As the truths of the Gospel were opened to her, she loved to hold fast the promise that had come home to her heart. The awakening that came to her did not at this time reach her husband. It is however very delightful to see how he bore himself towards her at this critical moment. The love she had to him, together with her wisdom in action, seems to have prevented any estrangement between them. It is evident that he loved and respected her. Also, he sought to promote her desires, although not at present in sympathy with his own tastes. He had seen the worst side of the world, and he does not seem to have objected to his wife being released a little from its thraldom; but her withdrawal from many of its gaieties was very gradual. Afterwards she thought she had made some compromise with the world.

At Geneva she met with Madame Vernet, who faithfully spoke with her of her need of a Saviour, and the way of salvation became clearer to her mind. At Paris she was attracted to Lady Olivia Sparrow, who introduced her to other religious persons; but it was at Kimbolton Castle, the seat of their brother-in-law, the Duke of Manchester, that she was enabled definitely to commit her soul into the keeping of her God and Saviour. She wrote some time after:—

"I knew Christ first, if I really know Him, at Kimbolton; I spent hours there in my dressing-room in prayer, and in reading the Bible, and in happy communion with Him."

She had been acquainted in her girlhood with the daughter of Sir George Home, Bart., of Blackadder. Since then Helen Home had become an earnest Christ-

ian and, on the renewal of their friendship about this time, was very helpful to the Marchioness. They became united in a close bond of fellowship, and Lady Huntly consulted her friend in the difficulties which beset her on every hand. In London they often spent hours together in searching the Scriptures, and the instruction thus gained was of inestimable benefit to Lady Huntly. She now commenced having morning prayers with her female servants, and with any lady visitors who were inclined to be present. There was much prejudice to overcome in this, but she quietly pursued what she believed to be her right path, and hard things were made easy. Another mark of the change which had come over her whole life was to be seen in the value she set upon the hours which formerly had been frittered away.

Lord and Lady Huntly had two nieces living with them as daughters. In 1826 one of these, Lady Emily Montague, was out of health, and they took her abroad for the winter. They do not seem to have been particularly anxious about her, and were able to enjoy their surroundings, and the society with which they mingled.

The Marchioness writes :—

"We all like Naples very much indeed, too well I think, as there is so very much to disapprove of in the most essential points. No one seems to live here for anything but pleasure. But yet every one is so kind and good-humoured, so anxious to please, that one must be strong-minded indeed to resist the attraction of a society where nothing outwardly offends, and where truly I have not been able to discover any of the improprieties which are supposed to exist."

Soon an unexpected sorrow clouded all the pleasant scenes, for Lady Emily was removed by death, after a

sudden accession of illness. The event made a deep impression upon Lady Huntly; she always looked upon her experience at this time as a kind of second conversion. Henceforth she took a decided position before the world as a humble follower of Christ.

On the death of the Duke of Gordon, six months later, the Marquis and Marchioness entered upon a large sphere, for the title was one of the highest in the kingdom. Hearing of the event while at Geneva, they hastened home in consequence, and at once prepared for their removal to Gordon Castle.

Just before leaving Huntly Lodge an incident occurred which may be said to have confirmed the faith of the Duchess throughout her future life.

The ruined castle of Huntly was an object of interest in the park. The Duchess visited these remains of ancient grandeur with a party of lively visitors just before leaving Huntly. All excepting herself were in high spirits at the prospect of the impending change. Her visitors, especially the young ladies, were occupied in examining the sculptures and inscriptions, climbing wherever a broken staircase allowed them foothold, eagerly seeking light upon any object of special interest. In vain they appealed to their hostess for information. Her usual thoughtfulness for others seemed to have forsaken her. Her companions passed on; the Duchess was left alone.

In that moment the untried future held her enchained by its magnitude. Suddenly the bright rays of the sun shone out from behind a cloud, and passing through a ruined window touched with golden light the inscription on a slab in the opposite wall,—

TO · THAES · THAT · LOVE · GOD · AL · THINGIS ·
VIRKIS · TO · THE · BEST.

The spiritual cloud was lifted. "It was," she used to say, "a message from the Lord to my soul, and came to me with such power that I went on my way rejoicing."

The Duchess of Gordon was still young when she was placed in this exalted position, but she was prepared, as never before, to depend for guidance on a higher will and power than her own, and she continually sought for strength and judgment from her Divine Leader.

The Duke was, as in his soldier days, a great favourite everywhere, and their reception at Gordon Castle was very enthusiastic.

The Duchess at once commenced morning prayers as at Huntly. One morning the Duke entered the room when she was so engaged. "The Duchess rose, laid her hand upon his shoulder and whispered some remark in his ear, when he gave a good-natured shrug and withdrew."

From this time, family worship was established, a catechist being procured to assist in the service. The Duke always attended, and sometimes conducted the prayers himself.

There are not many records of the early years at the Castle. The journal of one week in a little memorandum book has been preserved, also a few brief notes, every one of which contains some reference to the subject nearest her heart. The journal shows how watchful she was over herself, lest by thought or word she should fall short of the glory of God.

On one occasion she writes—

"[At] breakfast joined in the conversation about horse-racing, for which I am sorry; as, though but a few words, it might seem to approve, and I dreaded lest unpleasant discussion should be the consequence."

Again she makes this record—

"Sins of the week: unbelief proceeding from pride of reason, selfishness, carelessness, hardness of heart, vanity, evil-speaking. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. The blood of Christ washes away all sin. Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

Although she is so hard upon herself, those around noticed the almost entire absence in her of evil speaking; indeed her lips seemed closed against idle words generally.

As far as she had control, the Duchess discountenanced gaiety at Gordon Castle, and during her residence there no balls were given. She sought the spiritual good of her guests in every way she could. But her zeal was according to knowledge. Perhaps in nothing was her Christian discretion more marked than in the influence she exercised upon her husband. Her decision was combined with tender love for him, and with that "winning gentleness" of manner which was habitual to her, and his affection and respect grew and strengthened as time went on. Her prayers for him were fervent and unwearied.

In 1829, when a great flood had done much damage at Gordon Castle, and one wing of the house had been burnt down, the Duke exclaimed, "I am unfortunate in everything but a good wife."

In 1830 William IV. came to the throne, and the Duchess of Gordon was selected as Mistress of the Robes at the time of the coronation. Ever after she was the valued friend of the good Queen Adelaide.

But the more prominent her position, the deeper was her self-abasement. In view of the perfect example Whom she followed, she saw in herself only imperfection and sinfulness. This sense of shortcoming and weakness is often permitted to those sincere-hearted ones,

who have to follow their Lord in positions of prominence and difficulty.

To comparative strangers, the life at Gordon Castle seemed one of unalloyed prosperity; but there were burdens which often weighed upon the Duke and Duchess. A former Duke had left the estates heavily mortgaged, and they had been placed under trustees till all liabilities should be settled. A stated income was allowed for the keeping up of the castle, but the needs of the schools and other charitable institutions established by the Duchess, at times pressed upon the Duke, for he could not bear that any of her interests should flag for want of funds.

On one occasion the Duchess took to London a costly gold vase, hoping to dispose of it for the sake of a chapel she had long desired to build, but no purchaser could be found. Next she thought of her jewels, "and as the Duke was most anxious for the chapel, he agreed with her that stones were much prettier in a chapel wall than round her neck," and she therefore sold enough to realize £600; but as this sum was insufficient, her husband offered to part with some of his horses to make up the amount. This however was not required, a small estate unexpectedly coming back into his hands just when the need was most urgent.

It was probably about this time that the American writer, N. P. Willis, visited Gordon Castle, and in his "Pencillings by the Way" he gives glimpses into the life there. There seems to have been an unwonted charm about this place, for he writes a full and glowing description of it under the title of "A Castle of Felicity."

After describing the dwelling and its beautiful surroundings from a poet's standpoint, he gives us pictures

of the noble inmates of this princely home. His pencil does not however touch the inner life, with its varied joys and sorrows. He thus writes of his impressions: "This little world of enjoyment, luxury, and beauty, lay in the hands of one man, and was created by his wealth in these northern wilds of Scotland. I never realized so forcibly the results of wealth and primogeniture.

". . . I was sitting by the fire [in my room] when there was a knock at the door, and a tall, white-haired gentleman, of noble physiognomy, but singularly cordial address, entered, with a broad red ribbon across his breast, and welcomed me most heartily to the Castle. . . . The Duchess, a tall and very handsome woman, with a smile of the most winning sweetness, received me at the drawing-room door, and I was presented to every person present. Dinner was announced immediately, and the difficult question of precedence being sooner settled than I had ever seen it before in so large a party, we passed through files of servants to the dining-room. It was a large and very lofty hall, supported at the end by marble columns. The walls were lined with full-length family pictures, from old knights in armour to the modern dukes in kilt of the Gordon plaid; and on the sideboard stood services of gold plate, the most gorgeously massive, and the most beautiful in workmanship I have ever seen. There were among the vases several large coursing-cups won by the Duke's hounds, of exquisite shape and ornament. . . .

"The aim of Scotch hospitality seems to be to convince you that the house and all that is in it is your own, and you are at liberty to enjoy it as if you were, in the French sense of the French phrase, *chez vous*. The routine of Gordon Castle was what each one chose to

make it. The second afternoon of my arrival I took a seat in the carriage with Lord A., and we followed the Duchess, who drove herself in a pony-chaise, to visit a school in the grounds. There were a hundred and thirty little creatures from two to five or six, and it was an interesting and affecting sight. They went through their evolutions, and answered their questions with an intelligence and cheerfulness that were quite delightful; and I was sorry to leave them, even for a drive in the loveliest sunset of a lingering day of summer. . . . The number at dinner was seldom less than thirty, but the company was continually varied by departures and arrivals. No sensation was made by either one or the other. A carriage drove to the door, was disburdened of its load, drove round to the stables, and the question was seldom asked, 'Who is arrived?' You are sure to see at dinner; and an addition of half a dozen to the party made no perceptible difference in anything."

We can well imagine that in the mixed assemblies gathered at the castle the Duchess was often very lonely. On the last night of 1833 there were many guests present, and it was resolved not to part till the new year had dawned. It was a Sabbath evening, but nothing but idle chat prevailed. The Duchess, distressed by a tone of conversation which she was powerless to raise, retired to her own room. There by the fire, her face covered with her hands, she poured out her distress to her all-sympathizing Friend, and she tells us, "Here I heard these words, as if a voice had spoken them audibly to myself: 'Will He plead against me with His great power? No, but He will put strength in me.'"

In 1835, while residing in Belgrave-square, the Duchess was robbed of her jewel-case, which was taken

from her dressing-room while the Duke was out to dinner. Much sympathy was felt and expressed towards her, and Queen Adelaide sent her some of her own favourite jewels as a tangible expression of her regret.

In what spirit she herself bore the loss will be seen by the following note:—

"*Belgrave-square, March*, 1835.—We have every reason to believe that no one we are in the least degree connected with is connected with the robbery. The annoyance it occasions to the feelings of many, and the quantities of advice and suspicions, give me far more trouble than the loss of the things; for that has only served to give me more perfect assurance that 'my treasure is where thieves do not, cannot, break through and steal.' I am also quite certain that it would not have been permitted but for some wise purpose; and if I could satisfy the Duke of the folly of buying more if my own are never recovered, I should be perfectly satisfied to be relieved from the care of the jewels; though to be sure it would have been pleasanter to have had the money for them. I have my mother's, father's, and Emily's hair; the little old curb-chain bracelet I always wore; and my watch and glass with the chain. Three other brooches were on the pincushion, which were always there; and *every* thing else was taken except a box of jet. . . . The Lord has been very gracious to me in not allowing me to feel one moment's pain or alarm on the subject."

This summer the Duke and Duchess went on to the Continent for five months. It seems to have been a time of restful enjoyment in one another. For a few days the husband and wife were alone together for the first time since their first journey, and it was a great joy

to the Duchess to hear the Duke's "frequent expressions of thankfulness, and to observe his serious cheerfulness." The opportunities for reading the Bible together were much valued by the Duchess. At Geneva the Duke bore testimony to the blessing her influence had been to him, saying to an old friend, "Tronchin, I am a very changed man to what you once knew me, and I owe it all to my dear wife."

She feared for herself, lest his growing affection for her should draw her soul away from its centre. While travelling, everything that could add to her comfort was procured, and the Duke delighted in the attention she received in the "elevated and attractive" society in which they moved.

The prayer of the Duchess had been for a deeper sense of sin as a prelude to yet fuller purification. This prayer was answered during this journey; and the sight did not discourage her, but led her to stay herself on God in faith that the Sun of Righteousness would again arise with healing under His wings. Realizing her own weakness by nature, and her failure to attain to the standard she had set before her, she felt herself more guilty than the most thoughtless around her. She felt that she had had greater privileges, greater spiritual knowledge, and yet, she asked herself, in what was she better than they? This was a blessed experience in which she was enabled to feel sympathy for all other sinners, prepared, too, to receive strength in her weakness, and to have her desire that she might "speak of God's testimonies before kings and not be ashamed."

In her annual journey to London she was accustomed to stay a few days in Edinburgh, spending a Sabbath with Helen Home, and attending the ministry of Dr. Gordon. In the spring of 1836 there was much

to cast a shade over this visit. The Duke was out of health, and Helen Home was dangerously ill and in sorrow because of the death of her brother, Sir James Home.

Writing from London in April, the Duchess expresses to this beloved friend her fervent thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings received through intercourse with her and her house. In reference to her husband she adds:—

"I have also to praise God for the opportunity afforded through you of saying more to my dear husband, and seeing more interest apparent in listening, than I have ever yet done. I read part of your precious memorial of the Lord's goodness to him yesterday while Mr. F. (a truly Christian man) was putting on leeches for his eyes, and he said, 'Is not that a good letter to hear from a person who has been so near death?' In short, dearest, we must just praise the Lord together, for ever, with those who are already called to rest in His love, and those who would now join our praises or need our prayers."

Five weeks later the heavy cloud darkened her dwelling, yet was it a cloud with a silver lining. The Duke's illness had much increased upon him, and on the 27th of May the physicians informed the Duchess that he had not long to live. The tidings were altogether unexpected, and it was well for her that in her extremity the stricken wife knew where help was to be found. Retiring to another room she threw herself on her knees, and "as if they had been audibly uttered," the words fell upon her spiritual ear, "Thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called." With these words came the needed strength,

and she "rose up to meet the trial," strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

The next day the Duke died, and she further writes of the strength made perfect in nature's weakness:—

"I must tell you of the blessed consolation I have in thinking of the perfect peace which my beloved husband enjoyed uninterruptedly, and the presence of the Comforter from the Father and the Son to my soul."

As a mark of high respect, one of the king's ships was ordered to carry the body to Scotland.

When they had left home a few months before, the Duchess had designed an alteration in one part of the grounds as a pleasant surprise to the Duke. In accordance with this plan a rough quarry a mile from the castle had been transformed into a pleasant nook with grassy banks and winding walks, and planted with ornamental shrubs and evergreens. Now, instead of driving her beloved husband past the spot to the Castle, his body in the calm dignity and repose of death was carried by, while the summer beauty was in its glory all around.

The Duchess travelled by land, reaching the Castle at midnight to avoid observation. A friend who was with her thus writes of the arrival in the now desolate home:—

"That Heavenly source to which she had so long applied does not forsake her, and she feels that inward peace and wonderful support He has promised to all in trouble, who trust in Him."

She was able to be present at the funeral in Elgin Cathedral, and afterwards she desired to be left for a time, for she felt that she "must be alone with her God that she might know her own mind under the severe affliction He had sent her."

A month later she bears testimony to the faithfulness of Him who has promised that they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed.

After the death of her husband, the Duchess looked at the question as to whether in a retired life, which would have been her choice, or living according to her rank at Huntly, she should best glorify God. Viewing the subject in its various aspects, she came to the conclusion that in retiring to a comparatively obscure position she would be throwing away her talent of influence touching those in her own or even in a higher rank of life. This was especially her feeling with regard to her friendship with Queen Adelaide. As she could not take possession of Huntly Lodge at once, it seemed best for her to become a pilgrim for a time, and then she had faith to believe that strength would be given her to enter upon her new life. She therefore went on to the Continent, returning in the autumn of 1837 to Huntly Lodge, which remained her home as long as life lasted. On entering the home of her early married life all pain and the desolation she had dreaded were swallowed up in a most blessed feeling of the Lord's presence and goodness. After a few moments alone, she asked the ministers who had received her to join with her and her niece, Annie Sinclair, in prayer and praise, and again at night with the whole household and the servants from the farm and stable.

The widowed Duchess realized fully that the loneliness was sent by her Father to lead her to look first of all to a better country, to a city of habitation, and in firm trust she entered upon this last stage of life's journey, expressing the desire that she "may never look even to the arrangements of an earthly home with

more anxiety than if it were a house taken for a month."

Her determination to put aside her own feelings that none of her talents might lie fallow, is truly Christian. Her example must have been powerful for good in many ways. Nothing draws out the sympathies so fully as deep sorrow which, after the powers of mind and body have been restored, is not allowed to interfere with the performance of the manifest service of daily life. Selfishness in sorrow dries up the fountain of tenderness in those around; for why should this mourner be exempted from responsibility, while another, with an equally bleeding heart, has to resume the burdens of life.

The home which the Duchess now re-entered was well suited for her, and she took pains in making the immediate surroundings beautiful. The grounds of Huntly are very charming, "with woods, parks, and gardens, the impetuous river spanned by its narrow bridge, the old castle on its banks, and the wide circle of mountains in the distance." The loveliness of the grounds, and especially of the garden, is in contrast to the bleak moorlands around.

We are told that "the house, while wanting nothing that became her position, was marked by simplicity, regulated with strict economy, and conducted with remarkable quietness. The most beautiful order was the constant aspect of the whole establishment, pervading all its departments, and sweetening all the relations of the servants towards each other." Everything went on with "the exactness of clock-work." The Duchess rose soon after six, till in later life she had her time for meditation and prayer before rising. Breakfast was at nine, and at half-past nine the family worship was conducted

in the library, and again at the same time in the evening. The men employed on the estate, as well as the household domestics and the servants belonging to the guests, were all expected to be present. Daily after breakfast, as well as in the afternoon, the Duchess visited her maid Cossens, who was now a confirmed invalid. She had accompanied her mistress on her marriage, and for fifteen years had faithfully attended upon her, and then for thirty years was tenderly cared for in the house, being a constant source of interest to the Duchess, who used to take many intimate friends, and especially ministers, to visit her.

Every day at noon, in her own beautiful room, the Duchess had a conversational Bible reading with the young ladies who resided with her and with any intimate friends who could appreciate it. In these gatherings she had no taste for anything that was not simple, heartfelt, and practical. She was eminently social, and her cheerfulness when with others was unfailing. She liked to read the books of the day, light literature excepted, and she took part in the music in the drawing-room, playing Scotch tunes with exquisite skill. In later life her preference was for the songs of Zion. Above and beneath everything else was the craving for spiritual knowledge, which made the visits of those more advanced than herself in such experience exceedingly delightful to her. But she did not limit her intercourse to those who were known to sympathize in her deepest interests. All her own and the Duke's friends who were inclined to come to a house conducted on such decidedly Christian principles, were welcome at Huntly.

It is impossible in a brief sketch to give an idea of the multiplicity of interests which came to fill up her

days. Generally two or three hundred poor families shared her bounty. And she did not give without much inquiry into each case. When many extra workmen were engaged upon the house and grounds, she sought a chaplain who, besides assisting in the household and neighbourhood, would help her in working among them.

The Sabbath was a day of days to the Duchess, and she threw into it some of the brightness with which her own heart invested its hallowed hours. She always went early to the house of prayer, that none of her servants might be hindered from going, and no weather kept her at home. No arrivals or departures were expected to take place on that day, and when from home she faithfully maintained her usual practice. On the Continent she disliked to have social gatherings on the Sabbath, even with a clergyman present, lest the tone of conversation should not be in harmony with what she felt to be the true spirit of the Day of Rest.

The Duchess sometimes set apart a day for private intercessory prayer, and sometimes invited gatherings of ministers to offer united prayer for some object of special interest.

In 1839 the foundation stone of schools for boys, girls and infants, was laid at the entrance of the Park. Many friends joined in the ceremony, and a thousand children sang a hymn written for the occasion. It was a very touching season and one of prayerful interest to the Duchess, for the schools were planned by her in memory of her beloved husband.

Two years later these schools were opened, and were a source of daily care to their founder during twenty succeeding years.

The spiritual destitution of her own and surrounding

parishes distressed the Duchess, and she was fervent in prayer that labourers might be sent into this part of the vineyard. Although herself attached to the Scottish Episcopal Church, her intense sympathy with the people led her to enter with painful interest into the religious controversies which for years agitated the Church of Scotland, to which her husband had belonged. These culminated in the great disruption of 1843, when four hundred and seventy-four ministers left the mother Church to seek greater freedom of action apart from State interference in ecclesiastical affairs. She was for a time deeply troubled at this action; but two years later, after having long and prayerfully weighed the arguments on both sides, she came to the conclusion that she would best promote the interests of religion in Scotland by joining the Free Church herself. It cost her much thus to lay herself open to the disapproval of many whom she loved, but she had no narrowness of spirit, and was not separated from them in heart. Formerly she had for many years a Presbyterian chaplain. Now she reversed the order and had an Episcopalian in this office. She expresses her belief that she could never have been a blessing to her dear friends of the Church of England had she acted against her conscience, but that now while acting openly in all things she is in a better position than formerly to give them help. The Duchess frequently resided abroad for a few months. In 1847, accompanied by Miss Sandilands (who had come to reside with her on the death of her father, Colonel Sandilands) and Miss Campbell, she went to Cannes. She had intended to visit Nice, but finding that there would be more openings for usefulness in the former place, she gave up the idea of going to Italy till later. The beauty around, the open door for work, and above all, the spiritual sus-

tenance granted at this time, all combined to render the sojourn at Cannes a time of great refreshment. It was very hard, when the time came, to leave this field of labour. Many of the poor, who had come to the Bible classes, were inquiring the way of salvation, others had found peace, and parted from their instructors in the hope of meeting again in the Father's house. The little Italian children were quite broken-hearted at the departure of their kind friends.

The next ten or twelve years seem to have been marked by few striking events in the life of the Duchess, except in 1858 the death of her "dearest and most faithful friend," Helen Home, whose departure made a great blank in her life.

In 1859, the revivals in America were followed by similar awakenings in the North of Scotland. As the wave of religious power came into her neighbourhood the Duchess welcomed the new life that was everywhere apparent. She opened her house to the labourers, and Hay Macdowall Grant of Arndilly, Brownlow North, and Reginald Radcliffe (names now household words), worked much round Huntly. The Duchess rejoiced because she saw that the work was real.

In 1860, it was suggested by her missionary, Duncan Matheson, that meetings should be held in one of the parks during several successive days, for the preaching of the Word. The people were longing for help, and this plan would make it easy for all to come under the sound of the Gospel. The Duchess disliked novelty and publicity in connection with religious things, but she saw the force of the arguments in favour of this arrangement, and she was made willing to offer her domain for the use of the evangelists.

She sent invitations to ministers and laymen of

different denominations to come and assist at the great gathering. Her own house and all the houses in the neighbourhood were opened for guests. The school-houses in the Park were supplied with stores of provisions for ministers and their families, and for all they liked to bring with them. In a neighbouring field tea and coffee were served to the public. All the details were arranged with the system and order which characterized everything under the control of the Duchess. The meetings were very solemn occasions and largely blessed. They were followed by similar but larger gatherings in 1861, '62, and '63. The Duchess rejoiced over the increase in numbers and the deepening religious interest year by year.

In January, 1861, she was taken with severe illness, from which she did not expect to recover. During the time of greatest physical prostration she had an outpouring of spiritual blessing, to which she often recurred afterwards with great comfort. Months of weakness followed. In 1863 she writes, in reference to her recovery:—

"I thought my life was spared to give the opportunity of devoting for a longer period my influence and substance to the cause of Christ, but I see now a deeper meaning in it. There is more personal holiness to be attained, more nearness to Christ, and more joy hereafter through a deeper work here in my heart."

As winter approached she was making plans for the following summer, proposing to visit Kinrara, a place filled with memories of her early married life. Her desire was that it should now be a missionary tour. She rather expected that her restored powers were to be employed for a lengthened period to her Father's glory, but it was ordered otherwise.

A meeting of ministers for conference and prayer was held at Huntly, on the 12th of January, 1864, and another appointed for the 10th of February.

She who was the honoured centre of the circle at Huntly writes, with characteristic self-forgetfulness: "I liked the meeting, and had only one thing to find fault with; some of the gentlemen prayed for me as if I was something, and I am nothing. I must speak about that before the next meeting."

Very soon after the conference the Duchess was prostrate with illness. During the first three days she spoke often of spiritual things. She expressed her regret that she could think so little, when some one repeated, "I am poor and needy, yet *the Lord thinketh* upon me." "Yes," she responded; "that's it: 'In Thy strong arms I lay me down.'"

She had much bodily distress and then the mind became clouded. Just before this, on the 29th, when it was difficult to her to articulate, Miss S—— repeated, "My beloved is mine, and I am His;" "Yes," she replied sweetly; but there was no more any response to spiritual thoughts.

On the 31st of January she passed through the shadow into the everlasting light.

On the 11th of February, the day after that fixed for the conference, relatives and friends gathered in her sitting-room around her coffin for prayer and praise, sorrowing yet rejoicing. Thousands of sincere mourners watched the funeral procession as it passed to the railway station for Elgin. In the vault of the Dukes of Gordon, by her husband, in the last space left unoccupied, was laid all that was mortal of Elizabeth, last Duchess of Gordon, there to await the Resurrection morning. After the funeral, an aged peasant near

Huntly well described the feeling of the whole neighbourhood in these words:—

"This is the greatest calamity that ever befell this district; of a' the Dukes that reigned here, there was never ane like her. There's nane in this neighbourhood, high or low, but was under some obligation to her, for she made it her study to benefit her fellow men. And then for the spiritual, Huntly is Huntly still in a great degree, but the gude that's been done in it is a' through her."

"WILLING TO COMMUNICATE."

HARRIET PERFECT.

Lord, give me knowledge of Thy will,
Ready obedience to fulfil;
In chastening, suffering, keep me still
And Thine shall be the glory.

FROM "CHIMES FOR DAILY SERVICE."

"Many, many women throughout the land know what it is to wear 'pilgrim weeds,' and to have their hands clasped above a hidden pain:—

'The bright wine lost from the chalice,
The chalice broken in twain.'

And to such mourners the want of sympathy, and the dread of incurring the charge of 'sentimental sorrow,' leads to a repression and an isolation which often turns to bitterness, and is perhaps the true secret of many wasted lives among unmarried women. When a healthy-minded Christian woman, who herself has passed through the ordeal of disappointed affection, frankly meets such cases with the pure overflowings of a once wounded but thoroughly healed spirit, pointing to the remedy while recognising the struggle and helping to the victory—we may indeed say, 'Thank God for this means of grace to many!'"—*"Songs amid the Shadows," by Hetty Bowman; from "Introductory Sketch," by Mrs. Gordon.*

V.

HARRIET PERFECT.[1]

BORN, 1800. DIED, 1875.

SOME stones require much preparing before it can be said that they are "corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace." It is the same with human lives and characters; the training of some is comparable to the work bestowed upon a well-prepared stone, and the process of the cutting and the polishing is painful and prolonged.

After dwelling upon the life before us we feel that none need despair of being fitted for a place of large usefulness in the Lord's household. Here the natural tendencies of the human heart, the strong will, the passionate feelings of affection, the romantic imagination, also the terrible mental sufferings and the cruel rending of earthly hopes, were all over-ruled to God's glory and the good of others.

We see in later life the strong will changed into a determination to do the work of the day with unwearied zeal; we see the intense love making it possible to receive strangers as if they had been bound by close ties of kindred; we see the power of a vivid imagina-

[1] The information in this sketch is taken from "The Way the Lord hath Led me," Yapp & Hawkins; and from "A Message from the Throne," Morgan & Scott. By the kind permission of the publishers.

tion making the needs of others realized as if they were her own, and the sorrow and mental suffering, though long past, giving the capacity for unbounded sympathy with others similarly affected.

It is with these few thoughts relative to the teaching of her character and life that we bring before our readers the story of Harriet Perfect.

Harriet was the youngest daughter of a banker in the North of England. Being left fatherless before she was two years old, the little girl was much petted and caressed. The widowed mother does not seem to have been able to exercise much power in the training of her large family, and though some of the daughters were gentle and self-possessed, others grew up with impetuous, untamed natures.

As a child, Harriet lived in an ideal world, and as she did not like to go to school she was allowed to remain at home, and being partly instructed by her sisters Eliza and Catharine, and partly self-taught, her education was rather disjointed. She was ambitious, and hearing her mother say that she had read Hume's "History of England" before she was twelve years old, Harriet set herself to read it twice through before that age, deeming that if her mother was exceptionally studious she must be doubly so. Her great desire was so to educate herself that she might gain a powerful influence over others. She had yet to learn that a great deal of practical experience of life in many of its phases was needed, besides the intellectual training, to prepare her for the work of largely helping others.

Harriet was about twelve years of age when the marriage of her sister Eliza took place. It was a sorrowful event to the young sister. She now clung more than ever to Catharine, whose example in every

way had a most beneficial effect upon her, and in after life Harriet looked upon her as the instrument in God's hands of "rendering all early [religious] associations lovely and attractive to her young heart."

For many years these sisters were never separated by day or night. When indoors, they sat together in an empty room which they were allowed to appropriate. Harriet gives a pleasant picture of their home life.

"Here we drew, and read aloud to each other, and Catharine worked diligently, always making my garments as well as her own, and partly our dear mother's. Far removed from visitors, always in summer having a vase of flowers between us, and sitting at an open window looking down upon our little garden and a pretty country view, we lived the most contented and cheerful of human creatures. Annoyances and griefs often arose indeed from others, but we sought to shut out the remembrance of them when we were alone. It was rarely that we alluded to them, and I am sure that Catharine cast them habitually upon the Lord. Then, in the twilight, she played on her piano, and we joined in singing, especially some hymns sweetly adapted to Mozart's music; and then my dear sister read to me from her precious little Bible, which was kept in her work-box close beside her, and read at every moment's leisure."

While Catharine was absent, paying visits to her married sisters, Harriet felt intensely lonely; but a far sadder separation was at hand. Catharine was seized with sudden illness, and although she soon revived and seemed almost convalescent, a second attack a few days later terminated her life. Of this sorrowful time Harriet writes:

"For a moment, something like the realization of

her happiness—a beam from the bliss she had already awakened to, of seeing Jesus—was granted me; and but for that one thrill of consolation, it seemed as if I had no hope, and was without God in the world. One bitter thought absorbed me—that throughout all this great, cold world I could not find my own faithful, loving, watchful Catharine. Who would now care for my soul, and tenderly guide my often erring footsteps? But I was not left to the blackness of despair. The pitying Shepherd sought out His wretched, wandering sheep, and delivered her from the place where she had been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I implored the Lord, with strong crying and tears, to help me to follow her as she had followed Christ; and, having no one near me who could enter into the depths of my woe, I arose and came to my Father; I claimed His pity; I, who had never been conscious of an earthly father's love, besought *Him* to be my Guide, for He well knew how much I needed guidance. I asked him to undertake for me, I asked Him to give me the Spirit of holiness and meekness which I had so loved and admired in Catharine. And I went on reading her little Bible, as we used to read it together, and God, for my dear Saviour's sake, though I knew Him imperfectly, very graciously stilled, and calmed, and soothed me. Sometimes my dear mother and William were able in a degree to comfort me; but I felt it was best and happiest to be alone with my God. In the daytime, however, I found a tearful satisfaction in visiting dear Catharine's poor friends, in hearing their simple praises, the many histories of her various acts of touching kindness; above all, of the benefit she had been to many of their souls, and the blessed instruction she had given their children. Then we spoke of the joy of meeting

her again, and the tears we shed together, softened, yet at the same time healed, my lonely heart."

Harriet Perfect writes naturally of the feelings aroused by her dead sister's clothes. She says :—

"After she was taken from me, how did each article of her dress seem so like herself; so unadorned, so beautifully, purely neat, nothing more! Her shoes, above all, I looked at as something peculiarly sacred; I do not think the Lord deemed me profane, that I never saw them without the words occurring to me, 'She went about doing good.' When I was going to buy a pair of new ones for myself, the thought arose just as if her shoes spoke to me: 'Catharine would have saved the money for the poor, and would have worn *us*. She would have said, "It is all selfish sentiment to keep us to look at; shoes were made to be worn out, like their wearers, in God's service."' So I took out the shoes from their receptacle where I had laid them up as relics, and I said with better reason than David had when he took Goliath's sword, 'There are none like these!' So the shoes were once more set in motion, and again walked to the cottages of the poor, and to the little school."

Soon after this bereavement Harriet paid a visit to a cousin at Grasmere, and to her own surprise she was able really to enjoy the exquisite scenery of the Lake District. She thus refers to this :—

"I cannot describe what this first sojourn in that lovely land was to me. My cousin was in very bad health, and never breakfasted till twelve o'clock. What a charm there was in the early morning hours in which I was thus set free! I arose at five, and after a hasty breakfast of bread and milk, I used to sally forth in that beautiful September, in the joyous sunshine and clear

atmosphere, and experienced a pleasure such as I had thought, after Catharine's death, would never again be mine. I have often remarked the peculiar nature of those refreshments given to mourners when in the path of duty and Christian love. They are so pure that the heart yields itself to them or ever it is aware, while the *search* after any form of pleasure, or even relaxation, would be felt to be a heartless desire to escape from the sacredness of grief."

After this visit to the Lakes, Harriet made her home with her married sister Eliza at Liverpool, where she resided for some years. She now devoted herself to the education of her sister's children and to her own mental cultivation, whilst the visitation of the poor and of a little school, which had been established by the family, formed objects of interest out of doors.

At this time she became acquainted with a gentleman, whom she met frequently at the house of her brother-in-law. He had an accomplished mind, and good powers of conversation enriched by reading and travel, and his society proved highly fascinating to Harriet, whose affections became involved, only to find that he whom she idolized was unworthy of her attachment or even of her respect.

It was well for her that what little she had known of religion was a reality, and now, when urged by her friends to drown her grief in amusements which she had hitherto allowed herself, such as witnessing good acting at the theatre, and attending costume balls—she felt that her wounded heart needed more solid comfort than she could hope to find in purely worldly association.

Through taking a chill at one of the last balls which she attended, her health became seriously affected, and for a long time she was very much shut out from society.

Neuralgic suffering in the face set in with great severity, and lasted at intervals for years.

In 1825, during a time of much unsettlement in the monetary world, a new trouble came upon her. Her two brothers-in-law and her own brother Henry lost all their property. This was followed by the serious illness of her sister Eliza, and the death of two of her children.

Like many other Christians whose evening light has been uncommonly steady, Harriet Perfect next passed through a season of fiery mental suffering. She had continued her studies and the instruction of the children, though worn with pain and sorrow, and the nerves were weakened by the use of strong opiates. All this combined to produce an over-wrought mental condition most painful to the sufferer and perplexing to those around. Her mind turned to religious things, and in its unnaturally active state went over the soul's past and present history with intense introspection. Every failure in duty, every irritable word uttered, seemed to rise up in judgment against her, and she was on the verge of despair. Whatever the cause of this state of things, she felt that the heart-searching was in the end over-ruled by the Holy Spirit to the deepening of her spiritual life. A real illness (typhus fever) which supervened was a time of rest to her soul. She believed earth's sorrows were past and that heavenly rest was at hand, and it was a great disappointment to come back to life, which was found to be still stormy, the brain not having yet fully recovered its equilibrium.

Much of the agonizing conviction of sin referred to above proceeded from the strong impression that to take narcotics, even under violent pain, was yielding to a temptation similar to drunkenness, especially when habitually resorted to. She writes:—

"Whenever I heard any allusion to the vice of intemperance, I felt it was aimed at me. Before the commencement of my spiritual ordeal, none but God knew my conflicts in teaching the dear children, under the irritability of temper and susceptibility to the slightest shade of unkindness which these opiates produced."

Happily Harriet's own conviction of duty in this matter was confirmed by "Dr. Abernethy's emphatic denunciations" of "the terrible habit." She thus goes on to describe the struggle with temptation.

"With my watch before me on the table I used to agonize for power from God to lengthen the intervals between the doses, and at the same time to decrease the quantities. Although the ceaseless restlessness and depth of depression in carrying out this determination were far more than it is possible to describe, still my God and Saviour helped me."

Thus strengthened with power from on high, the victory was gained, the baneful habit overcome, and a condition of restful trust in the Lord seems to have been granted, in which she realized much of true resignation in the trials which still followed her.

Harriet Perfect had largely participated in the work of training her sister's children. Her loving heart clung to them with almost passionate affection, and now, when one after another, many of them were removed by death, the sorrow touched her closely. But she had been united with their mother in earnest, believing prayer for them, and while mourning the loss of their bright presence she thankfully acknowledged that these prayers had been answered.

From the ample details which have been preserved by their aunt respecting these dear children, we select a few passages relative to the eldest boy Tom, thinking

they may prove encouraging to others in similar cases of difficulty.

Tom was a lad of impetuous and obstinate disposition, and had given cause for the exercise of unwearied patience, prayer, and pains in his training. His aunt remarks:—

"I have always thought the difficulty his mother experienced in managing aright his naturally violent temper, was one great means by which her heavenly Parent convinced her of her own utter inability to do anything wisely as of herself; thus leading her to see the need of sole reliance upon Him, who, when sought by those who feel they lack wisdom, giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

Tom came home from school ill with consumption, and Harriet shared with his mother in the anxious watch that followed while hope and fear by turns prevailed. The mother, at length, after passing through terrible conflict, felt it her duty to tell him of the probable termination of his complaint. Meanwhile she and his aunt went on praying for some evidence in him of desires after heavenly things.

"One Sunday afternoon," his aunt tells us, "in the absence of the rest of the family, dear Tom was seated beside me. He read a sermon of Mr. Gerard Noel's which I had chosen for him, 'On the Nearness of Eternity.' Suddenly he started up from his recumbent posture in his armchair. 'Dear aunt,' he said, 'is it not strange that most people think so little of eternity—*for ever?* That thought, *for ever*, used sometimes to dart through my mind while I was at school, but I always tried to forget it, it made me so wretched.' He went on to speak with great distress of his experience of the wickedness of boys' schools, and ended by confessing

his own fear of death, saying: 'I tremble at the very thought of it, and yet I know that, although I may recover, I am in a very precarious state, for mamma told me so.'"

With joyful heart his aunt now set before Tom the way of salvation in its simplicity. He afterwards said that that night "he prayed for the first time in his life." No doubt he meant it was the first *heart* prayer he had uttered. He laid hold of the offered hand of the Saviour, and his growth in grace was lovely to witness; his temper "became more and more conformed to that of his meek and lowly Saviour, and patience began to have her perfect work in him."

With cheerfulness, on the last day of his life, he gave little mementoes to his family—his watch to his aunt, with tender words of love such as cheered her when remembered in after days of sorrow. His last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus: come quickly."

Not long after Harriet's recovery from the distressing nervous illness mentioned above, she believed the time had come for her to resign the companionship of the dear family who had occupied so large a place in her affections, in order to reside with her mother and elder sister at Needham in Suffolk.

In taking this path she found unexpected blessings. Among these were the sisterly kindness of some cousins, and the intimate friendship with one whose "tastes and feeling were in every way congenial." Harriet thus writes of this new friend:—

"The tender consideration of Helen at this period in which I was only just emerging from the suspicion of insanity, was made in countless ways an incalculable benefit to me. She showed me, in every delicate way possible, that *she* at any rate was not afraid of me. She

lent me Christian books from her own well-stocked library, and when the evening hours closed my labours at the schools and in the cottages, urged me to the employment of my little ability in drawing, by the motive of helping her in her works for charitable sales.

". . . Several years passed in these humble, happy occupations, mingled indeed with many trials. To these I cannot properly allude, further than by saying that every sorrow, every circumstance of oppression and opposition was employed by my gracious Lord in drawing me to confide more fearlessly in Him who had saved me, and had put His Holy Spirit in me, and who was, I knew, guiding me into all truth."

Harriet had the inexpressible comfort of seeing her dear mother gradually ripening for heaven. When the end came she had left her for a short time to watch by the dying bed of her sister-in-law—her only surviving brother's wife. The day after the funeral the tidings were brought that her aged parent had that morning passed away from earth after a short half-hour's illness. She writes in reference to this event :—

"My dear mother had told me a short time before her death that the thought of eternity was scarcely ever absent from her soul, and she very frequently recurred in conversation with me to her full reliance on Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice. . . . The last time I had seen my mother was in leaving her to take my hurried journey to my dying sister-in-law, when she bade me farewell with tearful, tender solicitude for my health. What countless remembrances came before me of all the undoubted proofs of love this, the only parent I ever remembered, had shown me for almost forty years!"

A year or two later, her sister Eliza's husband having again failed in business, it was concluded to commence

a school in the suburbs of Liverpool, Eliza taking the superintendence of the household, while Harriet and her two nieces, with masters, undertook the teaching. Harriet's decision, in which her sister very much sympathized, not to teach dancing in the school, brought upon her opprobrium from some of those wealthy friends who had assisted them in the undertaking. Her feelings on this subject are given in a long letter to one of her scholars. We give one or two extracts from it:—

". . . It is not the measured movements of the dance of which I disapprove, more than the unmeasured playfulness in which I rejoice to see you innocently indulge during your play hours; but the truth is just this—I hope never to be guilty of preparing you for the ball-room. It is true, indeed, we may be frivolous, we may waste time, we may forget God anywhere and everywhere, as well as in a ball-room. But with the help of Him who is ready to guide and to strengthen us under all possible circumstances, whatever you may do elsewhere, I trust you will never learn anything within these walls to increase the pride, vanity, idleness, and selfishness of the natural heart. It is not my intention to say much on the subject of balls; but my opinion is, that they lead to a love of display and selfish expenditure. In those who are not rich, much time must be given to preparations, and many charitable demands rejected from the secret motive, 'I desire to spend this money in adorning myself.' . . .

"Then, too, my dear young friends, what think you of the example to servants [and others] given by those who attend such amusements? All who have felt an interest in the poor know the serious injury those of that class of society receive who frequent dances; yet how can we counsel them to desist from practices which we ourselves

follow? It is said there is a decorum, a veil of propriety thrown over these gaieties of the rich of which those of an inferior rank are divested, but whether the evil be less in the sight of God because it is outwardly more refined, He alone is the Judge. Certain it is we could not very satisfactorily explain to a young servant whom we may have warned of the ruinous tendency of mingling in such scenes, why that is innocent in the rich which is blameable in the poor."

The next bereavement which, with little warning, came upon Harriet Perfect was the death of her sister Eliza. In the midst of deep sorrow for the loss sustained, she was able to rejoice for her beloved sister that she had entered into her Rest.

After Mrs. Perfect's death the old family home was kept up by the eldest daughter Jane, who, in an enfeebled state, required so much attention that their brother arranged for her to have a lady-companion. During the vacation following Eliza's death Harriet was introduced to this lady, with whom she soon became united in very close bonds of affection. This friendship with Felicia Thornton was destined to have such an important bearing on Harriet Perfect's future life, that we must give a short sketch of her history before it became indissolubly blended with that of her friend.

She was one of a large family living in the neighbourhood of London. Her father, a studious, upright man, of domestic habits, was very fond of his children, and doted upon Felicia. The mother, who was a worldly woman of violent temper, lavished her affection on another daughter, while to Felicia she was often harsh. As Felicia grew out of childhood, spinal curvature developed, and her mother, fearing perhaps that her appearance might disgrace the family, took so great

an aversion to her that life became a heavy burden to the poor girl.

Felicia's trials had been blessed to her in leading her to look to her God and Father from early childhood; and when she was about nineteen she was so broken down by the suffering heaped upon her that she prayed earnestly for deliverance, and shortly after, a way was made for her to leave the scene of her prolonged trial.

At the time she became acquainted with Harriet Perfect, they were both intensely hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Both were seeking a close walk with God, and both were assisting others as far as lay in their power. In Felicia's visits to the poor at Needham, she had heard often of Harriet Perfect, while the latter, on revisiting her poor friends, learned from them of their appreciation of Felicia's labours. "Numbers of them avowed, then and since, that no one ever set the truths of the Gospel so clearly before them as she did; and, to use their own expression, 'when Miss Thornton taught, people must learn!'"

About this time Harriet Perfect was unexpectedly released from her school duties, and with mingled feelings parted from her brother-in-law and nieces and the pupils, who showed her warm affection and in whom she felt so deeply interested. With a small income she now decided to take a cottage at Wilsden near to an intimate friend. Just at this time, when she was feeling that Felicia Thornton's strength was unequal to the care of her sister, a lady in every way suited offered to take her place, and Harriet was thus at liberty to carry out her desire to propose to her friend that she should find a home with her in her "tiny" cottage. Felicia had only a small pittance, and Harriet Perfect gladly took upon herself the principal maintenance of one

whom she loved for her own sake and with whom she sympathized on account of her life of sorrow and suffering.

The first six months at Wilsden proved a time of much peace and enjoyment, and the friends worked diligently among the poor; but the beginning of life-long and terrible trial was at hand.

In a short time a complication of disorders brought Felicia to a state of suffering often painful to witness. A kind of nervous excitement was also produced which led her, as long as she was able, to over-exert herself in order to carry out her designs for the well-being of others.

Harriet made it a subject of constant prayer that she might be preserved from causing irritation to her friend's feelings by needless opposition or unadvised words. Felicia always suffered terribly from remorse when she gave way to what she considered was impatience, but which Harriet attributed to the state of the brain caused by the overwrought condition of the nerves.

To Harriet this constant watchfulness was richly blessed, and during nearly fifteen years, with the assistance of faithful servants, she watched over the poor sufferer, never leaving her a single day. Much of this time her own health was feeble, yet through prayer and the use of the physical and spiritual strength granted day by day, she was enabled to remain with her precious charge to the end. After two years at Wilsden it was decided to remove to Westmoreland, Harriet fondly hoping that pleasant outward surroundings might be soothing to Felicia.

On moving to the Lake District, Felicia arranged, through the sale of her reversionary interest, to secure an annuity of £100 per annum. It was remarkable that this occurred only a short time before Harriet lost half

her income, so that now Felicia had the pleasure of contributing the larger share to defray their moderate expenses. The two were so closely united that it was delightful and natural to them to have all things in common.

During their ten years' sojourn in Westmoreland they occupied several different homes. One source of enjoyment for a time was a little pony-carriage purchased by Felicia; and in which, as long as she could bear it, Harriet drove her through the lovely scenes which, wherever they were located, surrounded them. Their chief joy, however, was in fellowship with congenial Christian friends, both rich and poor, and in endeavours to promote the well-being of those with whom they came in contact. Harriet thus describes one of their places of abode and the occupations of her friend.

"How vividly is every single feature delineated by memory—the old-fashioned bay-window so thickly overgrown with ivy forming a shelter for myriads of birds, and the sweet-brier at the side window, where Felicia reclined, diligently employed knitting poor children's stockings, or studying her Hebrew Bible; our favourite robin, too, which she had succeeded so perfectly in taming, and which was domesticated with us both summer and winter, perched on our screen warbling his cheerful song, always sharing our meals, and occasionally bringing his mate to the window whither he conveyed his dainty morsels, though he was too jealous of our favours to admit her companionship in the room. When we took our drives the servants told us this dear robin always stationed himself on the sweet-brier close to the window, and the moment we came in sight he was the first to welcome us.

"A tiny streamlet wound through a wild little wood

communicating with our garden and lawn. To this wood and close to this pebbly rill I used to draw Felicia's garden chair, and there for many quiet hours she knitted and I read to her, or we repeated Scripture together, or sang hymns."

Felicia's energy and perseverance in employing herself were marvellous; but her illness increased rather than diminished, and all the alleviations proposed and tried, proving in vain, it was at last decided to remove to London to seek further advice.

The preparations for departure, the leavetakings, the removal, were full of intense interest, for the future was all untried. Elizabeth, a Christian young woman who had been their efficient helper, went with her mistresses to London, and became Felicia Thornton's faithful nurse, assisted by a younger servant, Eleanor. Dull, noisy London lodgings were a great contrast to the lovely cottage they had left. And they sorely missed the humble friends who had taken such deep and prayerful interest in their welfare; but soon other friends were raised up who sought in many ways to help and cheer these tried ones. The spiritual help and the thoughtful presents of delicacies suitable for an invalid were invaluable. Felicia's mother and sisters sometimes called upon her, and she used these opportunities for talking with them about the interests of their undying souls. During the summer, she was taken out into the parks in an invalid carriage, and the air and the sight of the children at play revived her; but the time came when this was no longer possible, and it was with difficulty that Elizabeth's tender, skilful hands could change her position with any comfort. We do not intend to harrow the feelings of our readers by describing in detail the increased physical and, at

times, mental sufferings endured. Once or twice, when extremely ill, Harriet thought that the end was approaching, but Felicia always said that she needed to be still further purified. Three or four years more of waiting were appointed her, but her sympathizing friend believed that through all that was outwardly trying and perplexing, the subduing of the naturally proud will was surely being accomplished.

In this brief sketch we can give but a faint idea of Harriet Perfect's unselfish love and care and travail of soul for her friend. Felicia's affection for her was intense, although there were times when suffering so clouded her mental powers that the sense of love was dimmed also. This was a very hard part of the trial to Harriet, and perhaps, more than anything else, kept her and Elizabeth pleading at the throne of grace for strength and help for themselves and for the sufferer to bear all that was laid upon them. Thus the nurses had a double service, and while they tended the poor stricken body by night and by day, they were drawing down upon the weary soul rich spiritual blessings. And not upon Felicia only, for the habit acquired of continually looking up at this time was no doubt the means of their own closer union with the all-sympathizing Saviour.

The following is extracted from a letter from Harriet Perfect to friends who had shown them much kindness :—

"I praise God for your unwearied love, oh, so very often, dear friend, when I remember the poor friendless vagrants we were (to human sight), when we arrived at those noisy lodgings in Wilson-street. I always feel sure the Lord says to you both, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.' Felicia is blessedly patient and loving and

lowly-minded. . . . Never have I seen her so heavenly-minded as to-day. What loving gifts we are always receiving! We do feel them very much. What mercies and what proofs of Christian love have we received since we came to London! With grateful love do I commit you all to Him who has so gently led me, fed me, taught, chastened, and blessed me."

In January, 1857, the termination of Felicia's sufferings arrived. The afternoon before she died she asked for "*cold, fresh, spring* water," adding, "But the water that I want is the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, and the fruits that I long for are the fruits of the tree of life." She was in the arms of her dear and faithful Elizabeth when she passed away, without special warning, without even a sigh. It was a peaceful ending to a life of wild storms and raging billows.

Harriet writes of "the rush of contending feelings" which filled her soul as she became aware of the fact that she had parted from the "companion of the last fifteen years—endeared to her by so many circumstances, most of all by her love to Jesus and her long, overwhelming suffering." She adds:—

"Soon, even in a moment, I felt I entered into union with her joy and thanksgiving, for He had set the prisoner free! She was indeed with Christ, which is far better, and where she always felt I should soon rejoin her."

In that land where they do not count by years and months the interval might seem short, but to Harriet Perfect there remained eighteen years of physical weariness before the hour of reunion with her friend. During all these years she was blessed by the loving attentions of the same invaluable servants who had nursed Felicia Thornton.

Now, after storing her furniture, with the intention of letting the little house which they had occupied in Sparrow-street, Harriet Perfect, attended by Elizabeth, went northward. A few weeks were passed with her widowed sister and her daughter at Ambleside, and then three weeks in a cottage home at Keswick, where she met many sincere-hearted followers of her Lord, and many old friends who warmly pressed her to settle near them. She soon felt however that her path must lead her back to the south, though she did not foresee the kind of work which would open up before her. It seemed as if she heard in her soul the words that there was "a little lowly work" for her to do, "not here but in London."

Harriet Perfect found that her small income (which had been increased through the care of a friend), with Elizabeth's strict economy and good management, would enable her to return to Sparrow-street. She had felt willing to board in a family; but when this was not considered needful, it seemed an untold blessing to think of still possessing a home of her own, however humble. Increasing powerlessness from the state of the spine and the effects of the long nursing, rendered rest and great care indispensable.

For two or three years she was able to climb steep staircases, to visit the sick and dying, by whom she was welcomed, though so weary when she reached the sufferers she could do little more than pray for them. When these visits became impracticable, occupation was found at home. A weekly Bible reading was held at her house, and the young (as well as many older) found their way to her and opened out to her their difficulties and doubts, their sorrows and also their joys; and many discovered that she had passed through the same

stormy experiences before them and could give experimental sympathy. To those who were suffering, as she had done in early life, from disappointed hope, Harriet Perfect was peculiarly tender in giving counsel, for she remembered the days of old when her own heart lay torn and bleeding. But while sympathizing, she faithfully warned her young friends against "the unequal yoke." Thus through conversation and through letters, which she wrote with great clearness and rapidity, she was able to communicate thoughtful, prayerful help, such as few have time to offer, even when by past experience they are prepared to give it.

When she realized that her active life was over, she thankfully accepted the rest afforded by her peaceful home. Little did she know what a centre of blessing it was to become, sending out rays of light in all directions to the large circle which gathered round it. And not only by her written and spoken words, but, more than all perhaps, by her prayers, was Harriet Perfect a servant of the Church. Those who came to pour into her sympathizing ear their trials and burdens of various kinds, were not forgotten at the throne of grace. Each new burden of sorrow laid before her was a sacred trust to be brought to the Lord in prayer, and each joy which had come into the lives of her friends stirred up in her the spirit of thanksgiving.

The little home was unpretentious. Harriet Perfect did not think it right to spend anything on herself that was not entirely necessary, because all she had to spare she dispensed to those more needy. Hence the furniture of her rooms was of the simplest description. The house faced east and west, and the two sitting-rooms with folding doors were used alternately. Harriet Perfect's numerous friends were determined that the

dwelling of one whom they so fondly cherished should have a few adornments, and, with or without her permission, plants were supplied, and photographs for the walls, and a bright crimson cover for the drab couch on which the invalid sat half reclining. Here she spent her busy days. Here she wrote her numerous letters on a writing table which she could move with a touch to suit her position. Here she received her visitors, rich and poor, and many were the pleasant social visits of friends who joined her at the five o'clock tea. At six she climbed to her chamber, for as she always was up betimes in the morning, she needed the rest of retiring early. Often, many hours of the night were sleepless, but these were times of communion and prayer. Also she valued the quiet time after rising for preparation for the service of the day.

Harriet Perfect had "much natural playful humour," which gave an added charm to her society. She had also "an inclination to satire which had always to be curbed." If any who had known her in her impetuous, excitable youth, could have seen the calm dignity of her later life, the change would have seemed remarkable. When called to resign her active work she said she was able to leave herself in her Lord's hands, trusting Him for health or sickness and for service. She further said, and her example is worthy of being followed:—

"I find it a great help in bringing the will into subjection, *never to utter one word of vexation* at whatever may occur. This curbing of the tongue helps us on to a further step, the curbing of the thoughts. Much that we call weakness and infirmity in ourselves is really sin, for it could be conquered did we seek power from on high. The great evil is, we are languid and lukewarm in our desires after holiness."

We must say a few words about her trust touching outward things. One day she heard that the part of her income usually appropriated to paying her rent was no longer forthcoming. She said in reference to this: "I asked the Lord what should I do. Shall I reduce my shilling and sixpenny pensions to the poor?

"'No,' that was very clear. Shall I dismiss my faithful Elizabeth?

"'No,' that was equally plain. Then what can I do? And the [answer] seemed to me, 'Wait.' So I did wait; and when my rent was due the exact sum I had lost came, and continued to arrive every year to meet [this need]."

Her religion was one of thanksgiving. If "she mentioned a wakeful night, or distressing neuralgic pain, she would still give thanks and bear testimony to the Lord's grace and faithfulness in sustaining her."

In 1875 the physical weakness gradually increased, but mind and heart were bright and warm as ever. She continued to do what she had strength for, just quietly waiting for the summons which she knew must be at hand. During the last few days a friend came to conduct the daily Bible reading and prayer with Elizabeth and Eleanor. This had never been intermitted. It had been their mistress's constant prayer for these attendants that the Lord would reward them for their unwearied care and thought for her.

On the day before she was called away she saw a friend from the north of Scotland, who had come to take leave. Harriet Perfect said to her:—

"About two hours ago a message came from the Throne, that I might now ask to be taken. You know how I have been always afraid of seeking my own will in anything, but now I can ask to be taken home."

The next day, the 19th of June, the answer was given to her request, and at 9.30 in the evening the peaceful earthly home, with the tender ministrations of her servants, was exchanged for one of the many mansions in her Father's House prepared for her by the Saviour Himself.

ABIDING IN CHRIST.

MARY KER.

Love, strong as death, shall conquer death,
Through struggle made more glorious;
This mother stills her sobbing breath,
Renouncing, yet victorious.

Arms, empty of her child, she lifts,
With spirit unbereaven—
'God will not all take back His gifts:
My [child] is mine in Heaven."

E. B. BROWNING.

"Once, indeed, the Church of Christ was a sympathizing whole during the life-time of our Lord and a little after; but when He, its Head, was withdrawn into the invisible, and the members began to expand and to multiply immeasurably, their intercourse and reciprocal sympathies were of necessity proportionably diminished, till at length the very definiteness of the Church's form grew dim and vanished altogether, leaving, however, as it disappeared, multiplied images of its original, each an element and a type of the whole. . . . Now in consequence of this indefiniteness of the Church Catholic, its not having completeness as a whole, nor organization which admits of its exercising continual influence for individual edification—its very magnitude and multiplicity of members rendering it unable to act from a common will towards a common scheme of discipline—it is perhaps even theoretically necessary that it should be subdivided into such parts as may admit of an organization calculated to be a discipline for individual character."—*From "Catholic Thoughts on the Church of Christ," by Frederick Myers, M.A., Perpetual Curate of St. John's, Keswick.*

VI.

MARY KER.[1]

BORN, 1807. DIED, 1846.

THE phase we specially desire to bring forward in this chapter, is the example of consecrated motherhood. We believe few have attained to more intense and sanctified love for their children than the subject of the following sketch. We shall see in her letters that hers was a love that esteemed their highest good irrespective of her own pain or pleasure.

In the work of training her children a Christian mother should be eminently a servant of the Church, for in nothing is the Church of Christ more strengthened than by the possession of families consecrated to the Lord. In proportion as the mothers of a congregation are in spirit detached from the interests of the Church, so is that Church weakened, and the religious life of the family hindered.

The holy woman whose life we are about to portray, realized this fact, and while head and heart and hands were fully given to her husband and children, her

[1] Although many of Mary Ker's letters were published anonymously some years ago, under the title of "Memorials of a Departed Friend," no account of her life has previously been in print. We are indebted to her relatives and friends for allowing us to have material for the sketch contained in this chapter, and also some additional letters not before published.

interest in the whole Church of Christ was deeply absorbing. It may be said of her, that according to her measure, she did "know of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings for His Body's sake, which is the Church."

Mary Dunlop was born on the 29th of April, 1807, at Greenock, her father being manager of a bank in that place. She was one of a family of fifteen, thirteen of whom lived to mature life. The first home of the Dunlops was in Greenock, where they were all born; but while many of them were still very young they removed to Keppoch, on the opposite shore of the Clyde, their father having retired from business, and devoting his time to the improvement of a small but very beautiful estate. Here these thirteen boys and girls were brought up in close fraternal affection, developing uncommonly vigorous intellects and large sympathies.

Strong and enduring was the bond of love which bound these brothers and sisters together from early childhood to advanced age. The difference in age among so large a group placed some of the elder brothers in a position almost parental towards their little sisters. Several of the brothers lived much abroad, and it might well be that a "big brother" was unrecognised by some young sister, the remembrance of whom had been all through his absence a delight to his heart. On one such occasion the little sister found herself suddenly caught up in the arms of a strange gentleman, who exclaimed, with brotherly affection, "You little know what your wee face has saved me from."

Mary Dunlop is described by those who knew her as beautiful, witty, and attractive; her brothers and sisters idolized her, and in that intelligent circle she was counted as the one who had the finest intellect, the largest heart.

From her mother, who died when her children were young, she inherited that refinement of mien and manner which she had in a remarkable degree. She was "tall and slender, graceful in carriage, with aquiline features, black hair, large grey eyes, and a pure pale skin, through which the blue veins shone."

Her education and that of her sisters was carried on by a governess supplemented by masters. Besides more solid acquirements, Mary sang well. She read largely, but she was "so bright" that those who knew her "did not think of what her acquirements might be."

With her personal attractions, and refined and original mind, and her delightful powers of conversation, this young girl might have shone in worldly society; but when the time arrived that they were expected to "come out," the girls begged their father to let them stay at home instead of going to balls, etc. The interests of their home, with a pleasant circle of intimate friends, were enough to fill their hearts and minds, and in the midst of these surroundings their characters developed naturally and independently.

As Mary was entering upon her young womanhood, she was called to pass through an unexpected experience, and in the school of repression her heart's sympathies were developed towards all in affliction. For three or four years she was confined to her couch with spinal complaint, which did not, however, prevent intercourse with many friends.

We must not omit some reference to Mary Dunlop's outward surroundings, which were sufficiently romantic to have a marked effect on the character of a lively and imaginative girl; but, wild and beautiful as were the physical characteristics of the scenery, the intellectual and religious atmosphere was still more remarkable.

Keppoch is in Dumbartonshire, on the north bank of the Clyde, and not far from its mouth. A few miles beyond is the entrance to two lake-like arms of the Clyde, the "calm and beautiful" Gareloch, and the "stern and desolate" Loch Long, these, together with the river itself, forming the peninsula of Rosneath. From the windows looking across the well-wooded shore and the river, the soft uplands of Renfrewshire delight the eye, while to the north-west the bold ridge of the Argyllshire hills trace "their rugged outline on the sky." At the entrance to the Gareloch is Helensburgh, a watering-place called after Lady Colquhoun; and two miles beyond is Row, the parish of John M'Leod Campbell, and the scene of his devoted labours, and of one of the many troublous controversies of the Scotch Church.

Across the ferry, surrounded on three sides by its "leafy glens and deep rich woods," nestles Rosneath, the residence, during forty-four years, of the gifted and well-beloved Robert Story, the friend of Chalmers, of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, Legh Richmond, Edward Irving, and Thomas Pringle, and the valued neighbour of the Dunlops and the Kers, and of many others who delighted in his society.

At the head of the peninsula is situated Fernicarry, so well known in connection with the early history of Edward Irving's Church, the home of Isabella Campbell, a humble friend of Mary Dunlop.

When Robert Story first came to Rosneath, as assistant to the minister, there seemed little in the character or habits of the people to encourage the hope that his ministrations would be of much avail in arousing desires after deeper spiritual life. In numberless Scotch parishes the High Calvinism on the one hand,

and "Moderatism" on the other, had caused a deep sleep to fall on the people, and beyond the rigid outward observances of religion, there was little religious life manifested. But a change was at hand.

It required a mighty force to awaken the multitudes; but, previously to the great upheaval, one minister after another was aroused, and in the reaction of thought and feeling which followed, the preaching of some of these assumed a character which gave offence to those who sat in judgment.

It is not for us to give an opinion on the merits of any of these cases. Now and later, Mary Dunlop wept and prayed over the bitternesses and combatings stirred up on either side by interminable controversies and sharp discussions over points of doctrine, and even concerning matters of Church government. In the midst of these solicitudes for the promotion of Christ's kingdom among all men she became settled in her own distinctive views. The following words from one of her letters will give some idea of the intensity of her feeling for the Church. She was at the time only twenty-one.

"The flame now seems to be kindled, but the fiercer it burns the more it will purify. . . . My heart never was so warmed with love, feeble as the spark still is, for the souls of those men who are thus thinking they do God service by trying to remove the candlestick out of the place[1] where the Lord has blest its shining. My heart's desire and prayer for them is, that the examination to which their projected measure leads them may, through the Spirit's testimony, convey the light of truth to their souls, and dispel their darkness

[1] The intelligence had come that measures were being taken for expelling certain ministers from the Church of Scotland.

Yes, the wrath of men and of devils shall be made to praise God, and the remainder He will restrain. . . . The truth shall assuredly triumph, and the Lord hasten it in His time. How many calls for prayer does this involve! The season seems to demand such exercise as Gambold speaks of, when he says,

> 'My soul is on the wing,
> And busy with her God, about some big request
> I cannot utter.'

And He who searcheth all things knoweth that the mind of the Spirit is, 'Glorify Thy name,' and that the answer to such a prayer is, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.'"

Another extract, from a letter written about the same time, will show her remarkable capacity for entering into individual sorrow.

"My sister, you have known a sorrow of which it must be said that your heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger cannot realize the desolation of that heart on whom the Lord hath written 'widow.' The Man of Sorrows knows it all, and He has not overlooked your grief. While He has removed an arm of flesh, or rather, I should say, while He has received His servant to the joy of His Lord, He has *Himself* promised to be the husband of the widow. You are placed in circumstances which seal that blessed promise delightfully to your own heart; and oh, may the Spirit of truth dwelling in you apprehend for your joy and comfort all the fulness of blessing that is contained in this character of the mighty God! Yes, I think it must furnish matter of wonder and admiration to the spirits round the throne, that such words should ever have been spoken by the God whom they worship with faces veiled beneath their wings—to sinners who had rebelled

against Him. 'Thy Maker is thy Husband, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.'"

We have spoken of Isabella Campbell, of Fernicarry. She was one of the first fruits of an awakening which took place in the parish of Rosneath. Belonging to Robert Story's Sunday school, she grew up under his eye, and her pastor sought for her soul as one who should give an account of those committed to his care. After "many a long and painful struggle, she was able in God's light to see light," and from that time her path shone more and more. While yet in her teens she showed symptoms of consumption, and gradually became quite an invalid. While thus confined to the house her minister visited her constantly, and was frequently accompanied by friends from a distance, who like himself were "much quickened" and refreshed by iutercourse with her.

The biographer of Robert Story thus speaks of the habitual attitude of her soul: "Her life was indeed hid with Christ in God; its fountain was within the veil; there, she felt as few are able to realize, were the realities, here the illusion."

With Isabella Campbell, Mary Dunlop corresponded from her couch, and the two enjoyed uncommon communion of spirit, and true fellowship in the new, deep interests which were equally absorbing them. Being invalids, their sympathies were specially called forth on behalf of each other. The following letter from Mary Dunlop describes a rare season of personal intercourse. It is dated October, 1827.

"I cannot refrain from telling of the goodness of our God in the sweet privilege He has granted me, and that I have been permitted to behold Isabella's face in

the flesh. This time three weeks we were both brought very low through pain, so that the hope of seeing each other seemed almost taken away; but He has in a way most unlooked for removed every obstacle, and supported me without injury under an exertion which for any other purpose would appear impossible. Never did I enjoy an interview where so many circumstances combined to make the event most deeply interesting; nor do I ever expect to behold on this side the grave any one who breathes so much of heaven's holiness and heaven's joys. Truly, amid the green pastures of eternity, when we look back on the way by which we have been led to the city of habitation, it will not, it cannot be forgotten, that we have met in passing through the wilderness, and communed together of that better country where we hope to realize a more abiding union, and even when the golden harps are sounding in our ears, we may remember that we attempted to sing the songs of Zion when in this strange land. To-day we spent more than three hours together, and when I was called away she said: 'Oh! must we part when our hearts are beginning to burn?' and truly in the words of Paul, 'whether in the body or out of the body I could not tell.' The moments flew swiftly, but the hopes and joys that gladdened our hearts are not so fleeting. Oh, it is most gracious that we should be thus permitted to admire *Christ in His saints*, and glorify Him in them that believe! May He enable us to dwell in the light of His love, that we may reflect some beams of that light amid this dark world, and thus constrain others to glorify God. It is marvellous that ever such a theme should be given to us as the love of Jesus. Pray that my lips may be opened, that I may speak its praise!"

After Isabella Campbell's death, her sister Mary became widely known in connection with the early manifestations which, simultaneously with Edward Irving's teaching in London, caused much excitement in the religious world. We need not dwell upon this phase of the Church's history; those of our readers who are familiar with the memoirs of Edward Irving and Robert Story will understand the influences which now gathered round Mary Dunlop. But in the midst of conflicting opinions, and under somewhat untoward circumstances, her soul's life seems to have developed in health and vigour.

Deeply stirring was her intercourse with intimate friends, among whom she claimed such names as those of Story, M'Leod Campbell, Irving, and Thomas Erskine. It was, we believe, the latter who said of her, "that she was like an alabaster lamp, the spirit within shining through so that one only thought of the light." Her friends paid much deference to Mary Dunlop's judgment, and no doubt admired and valued the depth of her spiritual thoughts and experiences, as well as the clearness and refinement of her mind, and the glow of her imagination. In earlier, as in later life, her Christian decision was very manifest. One who knew her intimately writes, "Had she lived in the days of the martyrs, she would have walked over the red-hot ploughshares with an unfaltering step."

Unlike some of her friends, who also remained personally attached to Edward Irving, Mary Dunlop accepted his teaching, and was not stumbled by some of those things which appeared to many calculated to distract the mind from the earnest needs of the "living present." She was one who sat at the Master's feet and, in the midst of the practical service of daily life,

enjoyed blessed communion of spirit with the risen Lord. Thus united to Christ everything. (even apparently untoward events) were over-ruled and became the means of promoting her soul's welfare and growth.

Although she was fully established in her distinctive views, she seldom referred to them in ordinary intercourse. The prevailing characteristics, which were manifest to those around, may be summed up in the words of one whose young heart was ravished by her loveliness. "I never have seen any embodiment of things 'pure and lovely and of good report,' such as she presented. She gave one the feeling that nothing was of value but being good, that no price would be too high to pay for faithfulness in duty." The same relative adds, that what she most vividly remembers in her "was the love that was truly fed at the fountain of Divine love."

After some years of fluctuating invalid life, Mary Dunlop was restored to health. Prayer had not been wanting that strength might be renewed to one so fitted to use it in the service of God and of her fellow-men. Her family sought the advice of the most skilful physicians, and they thankfully acknowledged that her recovery was due to the blessing of God on the means employed. God can work either with or without human instrumentality, but often we may recognise the answer to our prayers in our being led to adopt the earthly means which are designed to promote the desired end. Mary Dunlop herself believed that it was in the strength of the Lord, through the exercise of faith in Him, that she was enabled to take courage and arise and walk.

She writes after her recovery, Keppoch, Tuesday, Aug. 4th, 1829:—

" . . . Since the Lord has restored my health so entirely (for now, instead of riding to Helensburgh, I can walk with great ease), He has called me to different duties and occupations from those which once were mine. For a fortnight or three weeks my father has been very ill, and, being confined to bed till dinner-time, needed much of my attendance, as none of my sisters are at home but ——. Then the poor people round, from whom I had been so long absent, called for much of my attention. . . . As refers to myself, I have nothing to do with circumstances, nor am I to have any choice of what situation I am to serve Him in. He was to me my sufficient portion in solitude and suffering, when my intercourse with the world seemed ended; and now He is the same God, the same *substance* when surrounded by shadows; and how do the varying scenes of changeful life unfold the preciousness of an unchanging Friend, to whom in confidence of prayer we may unbosom all our grief, and in sympathy with whom we may rejoice."

After the marriage of her sister Helen with Robert Story,[1] Mary spent much time at Rosneath. The sisters came next to one another in age, and were closely bound together in sisterly love, and were also one in being led in smaller and larger things by a high reverence for what they believed to be right and true.

[1] While writing this sketch we learn that Mrs. Story has entered into rest, and has been re-united to the sister from whom she had been parted during thirty-six years. She died the 2nd of September, 1882. She had resided in Rosneath during fifty-four years, and had been a true mother to the parish. Of her and her honoured husband it may be said, " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

It was while visiting at the Manse that Mary met with him who was to be the sharer of the joys and sorrows of all her future life.

Among the pleasant neighbours of the Dunlop family we have only incidentally referred to the Kers, of Greenock, just across the Clyde, where the family held an influential position. Mr. Ker was beloved and respected, and his judgment much sought after. His wife, a very beautiful woman, was full of large-hearted and motherly kindness towards all who came within the sphere of her influence. A large family of sons and daughters grew up around these worthy parents, and the household was full of life and brightness. Their son, Alan Ker, was a remarkable man. Although a cripple and an invalid, he had acquired not only a most liberal and varied education, but was highly accomplished as a scientific musician. He was a devoted worker, especially among the street Arabs, and "the chief delight of his life was in going about (on his crutches) doing good." One of his friends writes of "his multifarious attractions, his acquaintance with ancient and modern literature for discussion, his practical knowledge of the physical sciences for information, his shrewd and comprehensive views on politics and philanthropy, his fresh and original landscapes of the journey of human life, his extraordinary apprehension of character, his mimicry and gaiety, his boundless, active, buoyant, happy benevolence, and progressive holiness and growth in grace, that kept me in perpetual astonishment. And the frequent and sudden flashes of wit, and peals of laughter, that sometimes came from a bed some minutes before shaken with an agony of pain, lent an unheard-of charm and fascination to his sick chamber." Another son, David Ker, was chosen by Edward Irving, in 1827,

as one of his first seven deacons, and is still, in advanced age, an honoured dignitary in the "Catholic Apostolic Church."[1]

Stewart Ker, about the time of which we are writing, had returned home on a visit from Rio de Janeiro, where he had been for some time engaged in business. Mary Dunlop had not met him since girlhood. They were hardly acquaintances except that each had heard much of the other. Robert Story was intimate with the brothers, and it was, as we have said, while staying at the Manse at Rosneath that Mary met the returned traveller.

Stewart Ker was born at Greenock in 1802. As a lad he was thoughtful and inquiring. To his mind, the religion he met with everywhere seemed unsatisfying; he detected "as shams things that were generally esteemed as true;" and while pursuing his search after reality, he was, like so many others, attracted and invigorated by Edward Irving's early preaching. He soon became an ardent disciple of Irving, and with him "held the Hope of the Church to be the return of the Lord, as the only present solace and remedy." He was by nature poetic and imaginative. His imagination was indeed so vivid that it could hardly fail at times to give a bias to his judgment. In Mary Dunlop's "fine intellectual tastes and powers he found much response to his own thoughts." In her deep spirituality, and her

[1] While this volume has been passing through the press this devoted servant of Christ has been called up higher. He was so humble-minded that "he never adopted the title of 'Rev.' regarding it as quite unnecessary for carrying on the Master's work." David Ker died at Edinburgh on the 4th of June, 1883. We cannot omit acknowledging his help, so cheerfully rendered, in the preparation of this memorial.

religious views generally, he was one with her, and both intellectually and spiritually he could thoroughly appreciate and understand her character and life. They were drawn together by subtle and invisible affinities until the threads of both lives became inextricably interwoven.

The next step was the outward pledging of a troth, which in spirit had already been made before their God and Father. Letters written by Mary Dunlop shortly before her marriage show where her heart was fixed, and that she still cared for others with unabated solicitude, even in the hour of that personal joy which results when two human hearts, whom God has joined together, find rest in one another.

The marriage of Stewart Ker and Mary Dunlop was a very quiet one. It took place, according to Scottish custom, in the house of the bride's father, at Keppoch, on 23rd August, 1830, the bride being twenty-three years of age, the bridegroom twenty-eight. Her brother-in-law, Robert Story, the friend and adviser of many years, was the officiating clergyman.

It is difficult, after the lapse of fifty years, to get a picture of the beautiful, stately bride, for such she must have been. There is a tradition that one of her brothers-in-law often said he had never seen such a lovely bride, and we can well believe it. Again and again she excited the admiration of strangers. In Stockholm, whither she and her husband went shortly after their marriage, they were, one evening, entertained at the Legation. In the course of the visit, one of the company came to Stewart Ker "expressing his admiration of his wife,—looking so charming as Lord Blomfield led her out to dinner." On this occasion she seems to have been so much absorbed by the sense of the Divine presence as to have been kept from thought

of herself. This, we believe, was her usual experience, and it must have added greatly to the "calm dignity" of her appearance, which was an "especial part of the charm." A friend writing of her years after her death says, "I never saw any [countenance] so remarkable as giving evidence of the spirit within."

On August 24th, the day after her marriage, Mary Ker writes from Lanark:—

"I almost think I promised to write to you to-day, as you said you would to me; and I am the more willing to do so, as we scarcely exchanged words yesterday. Indeed, it was better not, for there were thoughts and feelings of all that God was calling me to, and all He was calling me to leave, that could not be expressed. The Lord was not only saying in words, but with the power of the Holy Ghost, 'The peace of God which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Now He is saying, with sweet solemnity, 'Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.' And with this assurance, we may well yield ourselves to Him, to be led by a way we know not; to be used by His own Almighty hand; to suffer with Him here, and to reign with Him in glory. You can scarcely conceive the strange impression I have of the insignificance of the changes and events of time, and of their vastness—of the tenderness of earthly ties, and of their weakness—of the pain of parting from all I have known, and the blessed repose of seeing them all in the light of God's love—of the strong confidence that God is glorifying, and will glorify Himself in us—with the deep, deep feeling of imperfectly realized worthlessness, and ignorance, and sin. My dear, dear ——, I already feel how my separation in presence will draw me nearer

to you in heart, and how the want of opportunity for speaking to each other will lead much oftener to speak of you to God."

On the return of the bride and bridegroom from Stockholm, Hamburgh, etc., they remained in Scotland until the spring, when Mary Ker had the trial of a temporary separation from her husband, whose business affairs called him to South America. Her feelings with regard to this event are well given in the following letter. It seemed a necessary result of her firm faith to receive spiritual invigoration from trial, but the suffering was not the less felt by her. She writes from the home of her childhood, March, 1831.

". . . It is a deep, deep and lasting sorrow that must be produced by separation from those whom we are called on to love even as our own souls, and I would not that one tear less should be shed, or one pang less endured, for if so, I would lose something of the fellowship and something of the sympathy of Jesus. My sorrow is not one that worketh death—rather it has opened a new region of communion with God; and so graciously has the Lord dealt with us, that we feel this will always be a time much to be remembered, as one in which the Lord hath done great things. Were I with you, my dear sister, it would, I am sure, refresh your spirit and tune your heart to sing His praise, were I to relate the countless ways in which God has made us hear His voice, and that voice speaking only love. Once I would have said He spoke by *little things;* but that cannot be *little* which comes to us as a messenger from the Throne of the Eternal, to tell us of what is in the heart of Him who sitteth thereon. Are you inclined to think I am dwelling long on individual concerns? My sister, I love to dwell on them in calmness and

wonder. The Lord's ways with me are a miniature of His ways with the Church; and it is in marking them, as coming to me through the Man Christ Jesus, that I learn what He is, and what His Church *should be.* I am more able now to apprehend the guilt that is implied and the exceeding sinfulness of the condition of the Church, in *forgetting* her widowhood, and ceasing for a moment to cry and long, with undivided heart, for the return of her absent Lord. And in considering the heart of my husband, I have been ashamed how little we have been accustomed to sympathize in the feelings of Jesus, at His long delay in a far country; and how little we have seen into His bosom, through the revelation He makes, when He describes Himself by the Spirit as coming, 'leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;' how He does long for the day of His espousals, the day of *the gladness of His heart; the day, etc.*; as if the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and His seat at the right hand of power, were all at once eclipsed in the joy of being united to His bride, still beloved with a love stronger than death. Could aught have quenched its flame, surely it would now have been extinguished by the heartless indifference and base ingratitude with which it has been met in all ages, wringing from Him these affecting expostulations, 'Have I been a wilderness?' etc. 'What iniquity have your fathers found in Me?' 'Wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against Me!' 'My people have forgotten Me times out of number.'"

Two months later her whole soul is deeply moved by the events passing in the Scotch Church. One[1] of the coterie of friends who had taken sweet counsel together

[1] John M'Leod Campbell of Row.

on the shores of the Gareloch, was judged by the Assembly, and condemned to withdraw from his pulpit. Mary Ker was not accustomed to judge individuals hardly, but these controversies caused her to suffer terribly. She writes :—

"I have much lost sight of individuals in this matter, and see that the battle is the Lord's. But when I call to mind what of the manifest operations of the Holy Ghost I have witnessed at Row; when I think how many songs of praise I have heard ascend before His throne, for souls brought into the liberty of His children, and the holy joy of many who had long known and loved His name, at hearing right things spoken of Him —my very blood runs cold to think that this is what they are trying to destroy. And yet do I remember with comfort that they who were scattered abroad upon the persecution, went everywhere preaching the gospel; and in this case too the wrath of man shall praise God."

So absorbing was her cry for the Church, that even the intense interest of the prospect of becoming a mother seemed at times to be overshadowed by it. She writes :—

"I continue quite well in bodily health, and I would say my spirit nerved for exertion or suffering by the dreariness and darkness that may be felt. It is no time for slumber now; indeed for some days the near prospect of personal bodily suffering has almost been forgotten through thoughts of dishonour done to my Lord; and when it is remembered, I feel it very blessed that everything is taken out of my hands into God's, whose messages so oft commence with this: 'Fear not.' Not fearing for myself, I may say I fear not for my husband, though I *feel* for him, and know that Jesus does more

tenderly than I. Will not my necessities give him many errands to the mercy-seat of Jesus, and, presenting petitions for me, will not his own soul be filled with the light of God's countenance, so that he shall find it good to be there?"

The baby boy, who was born May, 1831, at Keppoch, brought great joy to his mother. He was named Alan, after his uncle Alan Ker. A friend, writing of the child when he was about ten months old, to the absent father, describes him thus.

"Any infant which you have ever seen could not give you the slightest idea of your wee representative! His uncle Alan wept when he looked at him, with perfect delight. It is nothing to say that he never cries, for that never seems to come into his head. He is just a lamb that I never expect to see the like of again. He explains to you what a mighty thing it is to know that of such is the kingdom of heaven. He is a heavenly child. There is a sort of respectful awe that comes over me when I see him. I often thought how happy you would be to have seen him with his uncle Alan, stroking his beard, and actually speaking to him with his eyes. Alan said it was almost too much for him to see him, with his look of *infantine amazement.*"

In the summer of 1832, when her baby was rather more than a year old, Mary Ker started for Rio. The voyage was full of suffering for her, and the trial was aggravated by the absence of help with her charge. We have a graphic account of the miseries of the passage.

"From Sunday till the following Saturday we were in danger of being knocked to pieces. Dunn,[1] was perfectly useless from sickness, and the others, many of whom

[1] Her maid.

were sick too, thought they had enough to do with themselves; and it being so very rough that Alan was terrified to be laid in bed, I never almost had him out of my arms night or day. For nine days I only had my clothes off twice; and from trying to defend Alan from being hurt on the walls when we were tossed about, I got the skin off in several places, and my arms and legs bruised from one end to the other. He was very good, dear child, but I am sure it was miserable work for him; and the discomforts and inconveniences we suffered from damp and dirt, etc., etc., made me wonder at the mercy that preserved his health and mine; but I felt that all this would have been little to the misery I endured at hearing the name of God blasphemed. Oh! I shall never be able to forget the fearful words I have heard."

On arriving at her destination, she adds to the letter from which we have extracted the above :—

"RIO, *August* 8.—This was written on board of the *Frances Anne*, and I only add a line now that I am arrived at my own house. By a letter to my father sent on Tuesday, you would hear of my being at last in this quiet, lovely place. Its beauty you cannot conceive of, and still less the blessedness of such repose after all that has passed; and I may say the greatest blessedness of all in feeling that this is not our rest, but that we are hastening to a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We have had such multitudes of things to talk about that we have not come to the conclusion of any one matter. Alan is quite well."

Two months later a beautiful letter, addressed to her father, tells that she had been called to part with her lovely boy.

"*October* 4, 1832.—Remembering your affection for my dear, dear babe, I know what your feelings will be, on

learning the affecting intelligence that he is no longer with us, for the Lord has taken him into His own holy keeping! Those only who have ever loved a child as I loved mine, and those only to whom a child has been all that my sweet boy was to me, can enter into my feelings of thankfulness that the happiness of an object so dear is for ever secured; that my prayers that he might glorify God from his earliest days, and my assurances of his eternal salvation, have been so realized, as to leave me now nothing to ask for him, and nothing to fear. It is true, my dear father, I loved my Alan with *all* my heart's affection, but I ever held him as the gift of God, as being more His property than mine; and therefore, when called on to give up my precious charge, I could say, 'It is the Lord; He hath done all things well. I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He will keep that which I have committed unto Him till that day.' One short week ago our lovely boy was running about in all his usual strength and vigour. On Wednesday night he was seized with dysentery. The doctor was here, for in consequence of my previous illness he was sleeping every night in the house. Every remedy was used with little or no effect, and I saw after a few days that his strength was wasting away, although in appearance he was little reduced. I was scarcely able to be at all out of bed, and he lay beside me always, needing nothing more to please him than to turn his face to me, and fold his little arms round my neck, or hold my hand with both of his."

As the parting hour approached, his father, who had been sent for, not having come in, Mary Ker asked to be left alone with her first-born. All had been done that could be done for him, and now she held him in her arms till the loosening of the little hands told

that his sweet spirit had gone to another home. She adds :—

"In that solemn hour I did give glory to the Lord that my much loved infant was now for ever beyond the reach of woe, that no sorrow of this world should ever again vex, and no sin ever defile his redeemed and happy soul. Patient little lamb! He set me an example I shall never forget. From the night after he was taken ill there was never one cry heard—never a fretful expression. During the application of leeches, the lancing of his gums, and many remedies burdensome to his weak frame, not one frown ever for a moment disturbed his peaceful brow. He took every medicine, however bad. He needed little attendance, and it is my comfort that, weak as I am, my own hands ministered to all his wants.

"I think I am rather better now, at least the chief part of my pain is removed, since those sufferings are over, which I felt more than my own. This has made a deep, deep wound in his father's heart. He never knew till now how all his little marks of fondness had bound him closer to his heart."

On the 22nd November, she writes from Praya, Vermelha, "Oh! it is when called to restore to the Lord's keeping what is dear to us as our own souls, that we enter more and more fully into the blessedness of knowing Him, of knowing His heart, and of *choosing* that the holy purposes of that heart should be accomplished. All the letters from home are very affecting to me now, for they all contain expressions of affection and admiration for my lovely boy; but I like to read again and again all that is said of him. I like to know that all your inquiries can be answered by the words—He is well."

After change of air and some renewal of physical strength, Mary Ker was able to occupy herself in giving

instruction to some Portuguese children, besides teaching the son and daughter of a widow whose husband had recently died of consumption.

In a letter written to her brother-in-law, David Ker, who was truly a brother to her, especially in his sympathy with her in her religious interests, she gives her feelings with regard to her little Alan in words which will convey instruction to many hearts. The letter is interesting in several particulars, and shows that her sympathies for others were in lively exercise. It is dated—

"RIO DE JANEIRO, *March 12th*, 1833.

"MY DEAREST DAVID,—I have heard unexpectedly that a vessel is going to sail for London, and that Mrs. Ridley, one of the survivors from the wreck of the *Hibernia*, is to be sent home by this conveyance. All the cabin passengers except one have lived in our house during their stay here, and as Mrs. Ridley will be some days at least in London I have asked her to let you know her address, because you would like to see any one who has seen us so recently. Poor thing! She is a widow; her husband and she were saved from the fire, but he died in the boat the day before they were picked up by the *Lotus*. Perhaps you may be able to say a word to her of the Husband of the widow and the stranger's Shield. She has heard much of His love here, but I do not think that she has known and believed that it is even so.

"Will you thank Sandy and Ann and James Ker for their letters, and accept from us both much gratitude for your own to Stewart. He has not time to write at present, but meanwhile I may tell you that it has been a greater blessing to him than any letter he has received for long. My heart could well respond, my dear

brother, to all that you wrote about my blessed baby, my sweet little Alan. They used to tell me I loved my boy far too well, and that I was storing up suffering for myself if the Lord should take him, but it was not so.[1] Had I loved him less I would have rejoiced less in his perfected joy, and I would have understood less of the Fatherly heart of Him into whose hands I was called to resign my precious charge. I often think of Mr. Irving's words in reference to a time [of similar trial]. 'Dear season of my life, ever to be remembered, when I knew the blessedness of such joy and such sorrow.' Other parents have their hearts filled alternately with hopes and fears, with anxieties and pleasures; but we have no fears, no anxieties for ours, for it is well with the child for ever. Praise ye the Lord.

". . . I am thankful to say I am getting a little stronger, though far from being able to do what I did when I was with you in London; the cool season is coming on now, and I shall feel less oppressed.

"Farewell, dearest David, believe me always,

"Your much attached sister,

"MARY KER."

The thought conveyed in the foregoing letter, that it is possible for a human being to love so much that he can give up a beloved one for a brighter life, not only without a murmur, but even with joy, shows that the writer understood what a purely unselfish love is.

On the 13th of May, 1833, at Rio de Janeiro, a second child was born to Stewart and Mary Ker, and was named Alexander Dunlop. To his mother his arrival was a source of most delightful consolation, and his

[1] David Ker had told her "to love her baby as much as she could;" she replied "nobody else had so said."

companionship was a constant delight to her till the end of the year, when he was seized with a dreadful fever, which reduced him almost to a skeleton. During this illness the family suffered much alarm, and were in much danger from the natives, who often assailed their house with stones. Mary Ker thus describes one of these occasions:

"It is now three weeks since they began, and many times during my sweet lamb's illness it was very painful. One evening, the doctor said that his life depended on his getting some sleep that night. They went out with —— and others, and searched the whole grounds, and everything was quiet, so I lay down with baby in my arms, thinking he might sleep better in that way. To my great joy the poor lamb fell into a sweet sleep, which I had scarcely perceived when one of my windows was broken with such a crash as made the whole house hear; but the Lord hindered any harm to my boy. And now I am sure you will praise the Lord that, though hundreds of stones have been thrown, some so large as to require both my hands to lift them, although a pistol was fired into ——'s room, long sticks with knives fastened in them thrust through the windows, and all the doors nearly forced through, yet not one hair of our heads has been hurt; indeed, we have so blessedly felt what it is to have the Eternal God for our shield and buckler, that all the annoyance seems a low price at which to purchase such experiences of His faithfulness and love."

In writing to a friend at this time, she says of her little boy:—

"And now these many weeks he (Alexander) seems more than ever a part of ourselves, through our constant watching night and day; and with such feelings, how

desolating, how overpowering it would be to be left again without any child on earth, were it not for the blessed hopes which cheer the just—hopes which God has given to sustain us, until the glorious hour when we shall see that which now we hope for; when we, and the children whom God has given us, shall be for ever with the Lord; and, being freed from sin, we shall no longer groan, being burdened, nor shall there ever again be a 'need be' for God's chastening hand to be uplifted. During many trials we have met with since you left us, God's consolations have been very tender and very abundant.

* * * * *

"It is not that my precious baby has been smitten with sickness, it is not that my own bodily frame is ready at times to faint and fail, that gives me the deepest sorrow; but it is that there is that sin in us which makes it needful for God to do what He does so *unwillingly* that we give Him the grief of causing us pain. Under this I groan, being burdened, and the burden is just heavy in proportion as I see that *Love* frowns, as certainly as Love smiles upon us; and most heartily do I welcome the prospect of being one day separated from all that hinders God's glory, or opposes His will. Lately I had a book sent by my brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. ——, which has been a great blessing to us: 'Pennington's Letters,' is the name."

"*Thursday, February 26th.*—My dearest Mrs. ——, the doctors think that my sweet little baby will probably recover from this present illness; but they say it is of the utmost importance to his safety that he should be removed immediately to a cold climate. We know nothing of Mr. ——'s movements, so that if he does not return soon, I must once more take a voyage alone. I

do not feel that any person's health is likely to be much restored by any change that removes her from her husband; but I shall not act in this from any feeling of mine, desiring to do that which is best for my darling infant, and also that which will most speedily relieve my dear husband from his constant anxiety about me."

Owing to the necessity of taking the child to another climate, Mary Ker started for Keppoch before her husband, who was unable to leave till later. When Stewart Ker arrived in October, Alexander was restored to perfect health.

Mary Ker ever clung to her father with tender love. He was one who inspired his children with the deepest respect and affection, and his married daughters loved to gather round him, bringing their children with them to the old home. Among the younger members of the family circle, the coming of "Aunt Mary" was always hailed with especial delight. One of these, who loved her passionately, tells of their pleasure in hearing her describe amusing incidents which she had encountered during her travels. She was a capital mimic, and while herself perfectly grave during the narration, she would keep her listeners laughing heartily; and with her there was no restaint to innocent mirth among the young ones. Also "she was very generous, and came bearing gifts." Then her affections were keen and all-embracing, and she poured them forth without effort, and lavishly. In her presence "there was the undefinable sense of one who dwelt amid things high and rare;" her society was thus always elevating. It was not easy to say an unkind word of another when she was present, for it was her habit to talk only of the good traits in the character of others, and of their good actions. She was like one, of whom it was truly said,

that she was a living exemplification of the 13th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians.

While at Keppoch, in 1834, Mary Ker spent a day with Edward and Isabella Irving. Her description of this remarkable man, near the close of his life, will interest many of our readers.

"I never saw anything more affecting than the change in his appearance. To human appearance, he is sinking under a deep consumption. His gigantic form bears all the marks of age and weakness; his tremendous voice is now often faltering; and when occasionally he breaks forth, with all his former feeling, into such flowing, eloquent commendations, of the excellent glory of the Man Christ Jesus, and tells the dishonour done to His name, one sees that his bodily powers are exhausted by his still vigorous mental occupations. Add to all this, the calm chastened dignity of his expression, his patient waiting upon God for the fulfilment of His purposes to himself and his flock through this affliction, and it is exceedingly edifying. I had gone upstairs to see Mrs. Irving for a minute, where he soon joined us, and after speaking a few minutes, he called us to our knees, to pray for a blessing on the family under whose roof he was, to cry for the land, and to pour out his heart in affectionate desires for my husband, myself and my boy.

"I was going up to Glasgow with them, and just before we left the house he lifted up his hands in blessing, commending them to Jesus, and to the reward of his grace for all their kindness to him. I had a great deal of conversation with him in the boat, and when we got near the lodgings where Mr. —— and I had to leave them, in driving through the crowded streets of Glasgow, Mr. Irving laid aside his hat, and exclaimed, 'Blessed

be the name of the Shepherd of Israel, who has brought us to the end of our journey in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace,' etc., and continued for some time praying for us and others that were dear to him. I have been thus minute, because I thought you would delight to hear of this dear man being so hid in the secret of God's presence, and acknowledging Him in all his ways. His heart seemed to flow out in love to all mankind, and to bear down all the barriers which names and sects have raised to obstruct its exercise. He and many others, I doubt not, are suffering for the sins of those who have, in them, worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. God is jealous, His love makes Him jealous, and He will not let men cleave to anything but Himself, who alone can be a fountain of life to them."

In 1835, a sorrow, which might have proved overwhelming to parents whose faith was less real, came upon Stewart and Mary Ker. While residing at Garnet Bank, Glasgow, the summons came for their remaining child, the lovely Alexander. We cannot well shorten the mother's account of her little boy. Although such preternatural mental brightness in so young a child is generally the accompaniment of a very sensitive physical organization, still we occasionally see even in vigorous children a wonderful precocity, especially when they are constantly in the companionship of grown-up persons. Such precocity is not to be desired nor encouraged; but in the case of children very early removed from earth, their manifest comprehension of Divine truths in a manner far beyond their years is often an untold consolation to survivors, and may we not look upon the faith of little Alexander as gracious evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit to develop in the youngest soul a desire after and a love for the invisible Father,

"Acandy," as he called himself, had been taught to look to God as pre-eminently his Father and the Giver of everything; and the infant mind, enlightened by the Spirit, had realized the sweetness of the relationship, and had responded to the teaching with all the strength of which he was capable. Happily the words of the little boy are perfectly simple and childlike. Fragments from letters written by his mother to various friends tell the story of his last days.

"My little journal is now closed. My beloved and most engaging boy has learned all that was to be taught on earth, and the Lord has received him from my arms into His own everlasting embrace of love. I feel that I have lost, or rather parted for a little while from, a teacher, rather than from a pupil; for there was an exquisite sweetness, and deep preciousness in the lessons which God conveyed to my heart, through a channel that reached to its very core. Oh! that I may still learn through him, and receive from God all that His heart would pour into mine; for He changes not, although He varies the expression of His love. The love that gave is the same that has taken, and the same that is my portion, whether His gifts are with me or with Him. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever! Blessed be His name for the assurance that my happy children are magnifying the Lord with us, and beyond the strains we can yet reach. How fully is my sweet little Alexander's prayer now answered: 'Bless me and make me a good boy.' Oh! how his expressions write vanity on man's boasted wisdom, and his true joy beggars man's systems.

"During the last two months especially, my beloved child's obedience and gentleness have been quite remarkable, and his love unbounded. If he wished to do

anything I disapproved, it was quite enough to say, 'What did my sweet boy ask God to-day?' He would answer, 'Acandy asked God to make him do everything mamma said,' and immediately he yielded. He saw nothing between God and him, and when asked who gave him anything, he always said, 'It was God,' or 'It is God that feeds Acandy.' One evening when, in an ecstasy of affection for me, he kissed me all over, I said, 'What *could* my sweet boy do for mamma, when he loves her so very much'? He said, 'Acandy could just kiss mamma and clap mamma,' and then stopping he said with extraordinary earnestness, 'Mamma, Acandy would just like to go to *God*, that he might kiss *God* and clap *God*.' He delighted himself in God, and *He* gave him the desire of his heart.

"Friday, the 27th of March, was the last day he was out, and when enjoying everything around, he brought me a yellow crocus, and said, 'Mamma, look at the pretty flower that *God* made for *Candy* to see.' On Saturday he was perfectly well, and could not go to sleep till late for mirth and joy. On Sunday morning he awoke not quite well, and after Dr. A—— had been to see him, his papa came in, and found him playing with some shells on my knee. He asked if I thought him better since Dr. A—— was here. Alexander said, 'Yes, Acandy is better, for Dr. A—— was praying for Acandy.' (He had never heard the doctor's name mentioned in connection with prayer, but he thought this was the only way any good could be done.) He added with great animation, 'God is kind, kind to Candy, and God gave him the shells, and the pinafore to hold the shells, and God gave Acandy sleep, and God gave him his papa, and that was *kind, kind*.' Before this he awoke one night dreaming about a tiger, and when

laid down again, I heard him begin to pray alone. Another night he awoke, from hearing the sound of the psalms when they were at prayers; and he looked up at me and said, 'That's papa singing for God.' When he was very sick, and saw me distressed, he raised his eyes, and said with such piercing sweetness, 'Mamma, Acandy a good boy,' as if he thought nothing but evil should grieve me. Every time he was sick, his first effort was to comfort me or Dunn. Oh! he was so sweet and patient! Words cannot tell what God did for him or us. On Monday evening Dunn said to him, 'Do you love mamma?' Being very sick, he made no reply. 'Do you love papa?' Still no answer. 'Who do you love?' Immediately he said, 'It is *God* that *Acandy* loves, and God is kind, kind to Candy.' On Tuesday morning he was not able to play with his toys. I asked, 'What has God given to my sweetest boy to-day?' He said very seriously, 'God gave Acandy a pain in his stomach to-day,' but all seemed good as coming from God. When he was bled in the arm, and saw my tears falling, he seemed much more concerned for me than himself, and always assured me that Acandy was quite good. That forenoon Dunn bent over him and said, 'My boy never comes to me now.' He smiled and said, 'Ah, Dunn!' and put his arms round her neck, and said, 'Just like to stay with mamma.' Though he was never out of my arms, he frequently started in his sleep, and said, 'Go to mamma—take me to mamma.' How much this let me into the piercing of the Father's heart, yearning over His children, feeling their pains, and His nearness not known, and not yielding rest and comfort! On Wednesday morning he said, 'Acandy's wearied, wearied,' but that his head was not in pain, and he was quite pleased to have me with him. When the

doctor came, he said it was water in the head, and a blister was to be applied to the part. My heart and flesh seemed ready to faint when I thought of the only results I had ever heard of—appalling sufferings in death, or idiocy or blindness in life; but through that word, 'If God spared not His own Son,' etc., He conveyed such an overpowering conception of His love as seemed to lift me with my babe in my arms into His, and make me choose to walk by His path, and He has compassion on us lest we faint by the way; and He gave me in meeting His will, meat to eat that the world knows not of; yet knowing my frame, He made rough places plain. When the blister was put on his head, he put up his hand and said to me, 'Acandy can't take that off, but mamma can take it off.' I said, 'It is mamma's love for her darling that hinders her from taking it off,' and he never spoke of it again, but to say it was not sore. What a revelation of the *manner* of *my Father's* love was made to me through this little circumstance. It might have appeared that love would spare my little treasure; but God saw that love must take it to a place of safety, and He gave me grace entirely to believe His own interpretation of His acting. Some thought he was now better, but he was looking so like my precious Alan just before his death, that I had no such thought, and felt his dear little feet and hands turning very cold. Even in this state, his affectionate consideration for others was very remarkable. He raised his arm and laid it on Dunn's neck, but could do no more to comfort her. About one o'clock he prayed with great earnestness, as often as seven times; and when he had done, he said, 'Now, now,' his last word at night when I had given him my last kiss; as if there was nothing now to do but to fall asleep. In

a few minutes his face brightened, and with a full, earnest look of perfect satisfaction he said, 'Candy glad, glad!' He was then rapidly sinking, and I could scarcely allow myself to think I had really heard the blessed words, till again, 'Candy glad, glad!' was uttered so distinctly as to leave no doubt that the joy of the Lord was his strength in nature's hour of weakness. What a healing parting word it was for our hearts! He said afterwards, 'Candy going ——,' and then four or five words which I could not distinguish, except *home* as the last, and then he fell asleep in Jesus, his lovely face still retaining the full impress of perfect peace and joy, so much so, that afterwards, when —— (his little cousin) saw him, instead of feeling afraid, though so very timid, she said, 'I would like to kiss him, but I am afraid to awake him.' On the following Friday his dear body was taken to Greenock, and laid with his sweet brother beside their uncle Alan; that was our first parting. He had never been anywhere without me, never a night out of my hearing, or many hours out of my sight; but even now, although his presence is removed, we are not, we cannot be separated, for God is our dwelling-place. The change seems more strange to me now, when each has returned to their own occupation, and my sweet charge, my 'little charmer' (as he used to call himself) has been given in. I do sometimes tremble at the capacity for suffering which is produced by the capacity for joy and affection that were given to me in my little companion, and I feel that God knows my sorrow when He speaks of the mourning for an only son. I feel that God has spoken very cheeringly to every parent's heart by His wonderful works to my beloved lamb. When Jesus dwells in an infant's heart, and walks in him, how stately His goings appear. What a reality of present

protection, of present provision, and of present joy there is; of unhesitating appropriation of all that God has done. What God has done, He can do. What He has manifested of Himself to any, shows what He *is* to *all.* To His name be glory for ever. MARY KER."

Through her experience touching her little ones, Mary Ker was ever tracing the resemblance, or the difference between her love to them and the relationship of the eternal Father with *His* children. The following letter could only have been written by one deeply taught in the school of Christ. It is dated Garnet Bank, April 13th, 1835 :—

"I have been feeling very much how few come to the length of reading the record God has written in their own hearts; how little they realize God *even* to be such a one as themselves, in their pity and tenderness to their children; and yet how short it comes of that which it shadows forth, for between us and our Father in heaven it is not simply the joy of a *first, unbroken* relationship. I was just saying to Mr. —— last night, that I feel a parent's love to an infant, though so intense, to be very untried love; it has always met its reward in the joy given by the object. It has always been returned in tenderest endearments, and in unrivalled affection, and we press our little charmers to hearts to which they have *only* ministered unbounded delight. But God lets us repose evermore on that bosom which we have continually wounded, the love of which survives the deepest wounds, and overflows every barrier. Glory be to Him in the highest! My dear husband is pretty well, and I continue much better. I always used to add something about my precious lamb, and now I can always say, 'It is well with the child.' God who gave me such an overflowing cup of

joy in his dear presence while he lived, knows how sweet it is to have a soul so entirely a part of myself, now ceasing not to praise Him; now beyond those bounds where he can ever grieve our Father's heart; removed where he shall hunger no more, and thirst no more, and where sorrow and sighing can never darken the brightness of his joy."

On leaving Garnet Bank, she writes in the same month:—

"To me it is like a second parting from my little animated companion, to leave the place where we enjoyed such delightful hours together, and to begin our wanderings again without him. But oh! the rest there is in knowing that we go alone *because* he has reached his journey's end before us. He has found his home. It would be good if I had learned all that Jesus meant to teach by having set a little child in the midst of *us;* but I have through grace learned something, for my sweet boy had no choice of place or condition beyond 'going with mamma,' or 'staying with mamma'; and I feel also that as God has said, 'I will never leave Thee,' as I go with Him, that in every place, 'I have and abound, and have *need* of nothing.'"

We cannot omit the following, written from Rosneath Manse, the home of her sister Helen Story:—

"*June 22nd*, 1835.—You may imagine that my progress towards Keppoch was very exhausting. The last time I had been in a steamboat was going up that river with my lovely boy, and there was a resurrection in my memory of every step, and look, and smile, though I did not know then it was to be our last journey together. The time before was accompanying dearest Mr. Irving, on his last journey too, for they were both to fall asleep in Jesus there.

"My head was aching to distraction, and my heart still more, when I reached Keppoch. Just at that time twelve months I arrived from Rio, and all was gladness and joy at the first sight of my boy. Our last meeting was in perfect silence. No one could express what all were feeling, so we sat together and wept. Dear Mrs. ——, I believe, as long as God spares to you *any* one of your dear children, you can never know what I have passed through since I went to that place. There are no stepping-stones on which we may pass through the deep waters of affliction. God will cause us to go beyond *our depth*, that His hand may be our only stay. He will prove whether we love *Him* by touching us in our tenderest part, and showing us whether we *prefer His will* to the enjoyment of that which was dearer to us than life; and this proving is to do us good; for I find it really good to love that Will, by whose act my inmost heart is bleeding, and to feel, in looking forward to the continuance of this awful void, that the will of God will be to me more than my children.

"I believe the best service, for ourselves and others, is putting the Lord in remembrance, not because He forgets, but because He likes to multiply the blessing by connecting many with it. When I feel, as I do every hour, how much our intercourse (with me) is surface work at best, how little the depths of our joys or sorrows are sounded by any but by that one Heart that tasted every man's cup, and is acquainted with every heart's bitterness, it seems as if the only true intercourse of souls is that which we get to through God's heart, and in which we feel the pulsation of life in another's soul drawn also to that heart which is our common centre."

Her thoughts on the training of children are often very sweet and very teaching; and the more so, be-

cause in her deep humility she always felt herself a learner in this most blessed service for her Lord. Referring to the Scripture which enjoins parents to "bring" their children "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," she says:—

"This nurture I must know from God, before to my child I can be His representative; and it is for all this, and much, much more than this, that God has made provision; whoever is not partaking it has a large, large inheritance unappropriated. Would that all would take it as freely as it is given, and so the now-closed channels of bliss would convey rich treasure to our children, and we should be saved the guilt of robbing them of what, as stewards, we are appointed to convey; and of robbing God of the glory He would have in their growing up as trees of His planting. This is but a hint. I shall not write more at present, but remain your affectionate friend, Mary Ker."

In January, 1836, at Glasgow, a beautiful little girl, Margaret Ann, was born early in the morning of the 16th, but on the evening of the same day was recalled from earth, and for the third time the parents were left childless. Mary Ker writes shortly after these events:—

"After the enduring of much anguish of spirit, and the experience of the most abundant consolations, the Lord gave us the prospect of another; and it seemed to me as if the possession of a living child on earth would be a joy too intense for the body to sustain. In the summer I went to England with my husband, and took cold at Liverpool, which brought on inflammation in the chest and spitting of blood, and I was brought home nearly quite exhausted, and remained at Rosneath and Keppoch till the beginning of October. . . . Since coming here we enjoyed a delightful time of rest, and

my husband has been constantly with me. Sometimes I have been very unwell, at other times better, till the 7th of January, when I was attacked with inflammation, and for nine days and nights suffered untold agonies, both from the disease and the remedies. The doctors did not hold out any hope, and on the 15th I thought I could not see the morning, and Stewart, with Mr. Story and Helen, were called up, thinking I was just dying; but we knew not the thoughts of the Lord, who intended once more to let me see His goodness in the land of the living. The prospect of going was full of glory; yet I was willing to endure the will of the Lord, and no sorrow, even momentary, was suffered to obscure the bright vision of His love in which I was upheld, or to intercept the conscious nearness of His supporting presence. To my dear husband it was a time of suffering, that has reduced him to a skeleton; but God strengthened him also with strength in his soul, and made him a channel of much strength to me. On the 16th, at five o'clock, my beloved little girl was born, and our mouths were filled with praise. I saw her when she was dressed, the most perfectly lovely form I ever saw—not like a baby in features, but like an exquisite miniature of a full-grown beauty. She opened her eyes once while I saw her, and continued beside me till it was time for rest; but her morning dawned where the sun should go no more down; for she fell asleep in Jesus, and thus quickly bid us farewell, to join her little brothers, where they shall sorrow no more for ever."

On January 30th she writes:—

"On Wednesday I laid my beautiful baby in her narrow bed, the most perfect earthly form I ever looked at, and we took our farewell kiss of her peaceful brow, and gave her up till the restitution of all things; when

our three precious treasures, now laid up for us in heaven, shall be restored again; when death can have no more dominion over us. Dear, dear babe; the yearnings of my heart over my little beauty are too intense to be described:—

'The last-born babe, why lies its part
Deep in the mother's inmost heart?
But that the Lord and source of love
Would have His weakest ever prove
Our tenderest care!'

"Yet I would not, even by a wish, keep from the Lord the reward He has chosen; for children are the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

A day or two after she sends to a friend tender thanks for asking her to be godmother to her little one. She says, "There was something soothing to my heart in hearing of any bond made between me and any child on earth."

There is hardly a more complete evidence of Mary Ker's acquiescence in her Lord's will in the removal of her children, than the interest she took in the children of others. How many of us, who call ourselves Christians, can often hardly bear to see others rejoicing in such joys as we have lost, or have been denied? This murmuring spirit is no doubt a sign of the low ebb to which the Christian life can fall.

Mary Ker's religion did more for her than this. During the illness of a sister she took charge of her baby, with her own little Alan, and again and again, when bereft of her only child, she turned with an overflowing love to this little one, who, as she grew into girlhood, looked up and clung to her aunt with ever growing trust and affection, as to a foster-mother.

While Mary Ker praised God in the furnace, she

realized that it was *a furnace* through which she was passing. She writes from Glasgow, February 11th:—

"Instead of any of us going to converse with you, the Lord was calling us aside to speak to us Himself; and who shall tell the words of surpassing tenderness that come from the heart of Jesus; so that to know 'It is I,' makes a blessed calm in the soul, even amid bodily agony and bereavement of heart, and the passing away of bright and cherished hopes, which those only know whose hearts have clung to such hopes amid the heavings of unoccupied energies and unclaimed affections. Yes, dearest ——, the furnace of strong pain was hot, and three times now has my heart been emptied of what to me was a part of my being; and, therefore, is it that it well becomes *me* to magnify the Lord, the portion of our inheritance and our cup, and to say that, in having Him apart from His gifts, we have enough for time—enough for eternity."

Where each letter contains some helpful and teaching word, or some thought of value, because practical and experimental, and often original, we find it difficult, in a brief sketch, to bring our extracts within necessary limits. While therefore we mainly select such as bear upon her relationship to her children, we cannot forbear occasionally exhibiting some other phase of character or life.

On the subject of judging others, especially in reference to those who, while differing in view, are yet in truth the followers of Christ, she writes:—

"Oh! for a further entrance into the one heart of never-failing love, which would bind us in the most sensitive tenderness of sympathy to every human heart, multiplying our sorrows indeed, under the present groaning condition of the purchased inheritance, but multi-

plying also our intercessions and thanksgivings, and kindling and enlarging our joy, in anticipation of the approach of our Deliverer and our King. . . . How very awful that we should be judging those whom Jesus has so purchased, that our hearts should not be borne out on the tide of His love to all whom that love embraces. My very dear sister, I know that this is our calling, and I see how holy it is; but where is the walking therein? where the quickening by that living love, the growing up into its strength? where the travailing in birth? where the sighing and crying? where the condemnation of sin *only* by separation from it? In the utter destitution of the soul how refreshing to remember and give thanks unto God for His unspeakable gift, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily; how comforting the reality of our membership in Jesus; how dear the rest of returning to our Father's bosom, to tell what aileth us, or, as it is with me, that I do not know what aileth—that I can neither discern all the defilement, or cleanse it away, but can just appeal to the Shepherd's care, and say, We are Thy sheep."

From Rio, whither she had gone in 1836, she writes to a friend who had lately taken a wife:—

"And now, my dear friend, having mentioned the various persons of whom you may wish to hear, I hasten to the chief subject of my letter, and to wish you and your wife all the enjoyment which I believe God desires to pour into your cup; for now every joy will be doubled, and every sorrow be lessened, by the sympathy of another heart. God has called you to a high place, as a husband even to show forth the faithful love and unfailing tenderness and holy jealousy of Jesus towards His Church, and He has made provision for the discharge of the solemn responsibilities in the riches of

His grace. But you will have need to run your race, looking unto Jesus; dying daily unto self, and abiding in your Lord; that living by Him, you may prove a true witness of the name you bear; manifesting His spirit, seeking to fulfil His purpose, holding your authority for Him and not for yourself. . . . I doubt not that one desire of His heart, in giving you what you have prayed for, and letting you know the rest of having a companion for your every thought, is to *win* you to seek from Jesus that joy for which He has long served and long waited. Is it time for men to dwell in their ceiled houses, and for the house of the Lord to be desolate?"

Mary Ker lived in such close fellowship with her Lord, and in Him with those whom she loved, that she sometimes had a realization of their experiencing sorrow or suffering when no communication had passed between her and them for long. One night she was impelled to pour out her soul in prayer, asking many things for a friend with whom she had had little intercourse for years, and no correspondence. She heard afterwards that her friend was on that very night taken alarmingly ill, and her infant, who at the same time was seized with severe pain, died a fortnight afterwards.

To one needing sympathy she writes:—

"Dearest —— has often told me, amid the strangely varied circumstances of our life, that one purpose of God in emptying from vessel to vessel was that I might learn sympathy with others. I am reminded of his remark by the intimate acquaintance I seem to feel with your present situation. I have so often known what it is to be a *stranger* among those nearest to me in bodily presence. I have known the dreariness and *outwardness*—the almost hypocrisy—of appearing to share in what is around, when all that is

really one's life is dwelling apart, flowing in an undercurrent. I have known, too, that this part of God's leading about is to humble and to prove us, to show that we are looking out for our own comfort and pleasure, while He is setting before us the showing forth of His love for the profit of others, and that we fail in His hand for this purpose, and even in our sorrow are more occupied with our own grief than with His."

The following passage is full of deep and solemn experience. It is addressed to her husband.

"It is now evening, and although you are absent from my presence, yet never from my heart. I am glad to speak a little to you. Dear Stewart, I am not alone. The Father and the Son are, and have been present, so as to absorb all utterance, even in the heart, except the simple breath of adoption, my Father, my Father! But words cannot tell these things. There is a way (Jesus) by which we reach the holy place of the Father's heart, a rest where no fear is; there is a shelter so near the Father's own bosom, encircled by His arms, where the enemy *dare* not push at us; there is a consciousness of the intense, full, eternal pulsation (so to speak) in that heart of living love that makes it appear worse than death to wound it. . . . I am more and more convinced that it is only the bullock's resistance to the yoke that occasions any pain. To alter the yoke in shape or position would make no difference, the resistance would express itself against that. I feel that God lets something touch the diseased, inflamed, unclean part, that its condition may be proved, and healing sought; not in the removal of the pricking instrument, but the drawing away of that which makes it sore. Now we are always thinking that the evil thing is in the instrument, and look the wrong way. God knows how

to heal the evil when *it* is committed to Him, having proved its existence and made us willing to let Him work."

In June, 1837, at Falmouth, a second daughter was given to Stewart and Mary Ker, and never again were they left childless. The little Mary Ann is described as a delightful, happy baby, full of health and spirits. A few months after this event, Mary Ker reviews past scenes and experiences, in a letter to her husband:

"MANCHESTER, *Dec. 16th*, 1837.—I have just laid down Isabella's hymn-book,[1] which she left me at her death. How strange the thoughts awakened by reading over those which we used to repeat to each other! I seem so much more at home with those who are gone than with those who remain. You will think it curious to hear me say I have been dwelling much in the past. In general I could not bear to review any portion of time, except seeing it through the blood of Jesus, but that only changed what would have been terror into grief; and I am jealous in myself of that remembering the doings of the Lord when I am the heroine of the tale, so to speak; for the flesh can nourish itself on such meditations. But this season recalls many things to my mind. The 13th was the third anniversary of your return from Rio, the day after dear Mr. Irving's funeral. This time two years my heart was filled with the most gladdening anticipations of the joy of my beautiful Margaret Ann's birth. Then came what I felt to be the winding up of my earthly history—the closing my eyes on things seen—and that unutterable, untired communion with God, so that whether in the body or out of the body, I could hardly tell. Then the sight

[1] Isabella Campbell.

of my infant, and my separation from her, and the being brought again to tread life's dreary waste—to be tossed on the ocean without, and to find that but a picture of the sea in the soul. The successive hopes, fears, expectations, disappointments, mercies, chastenings, preservations, blessings, forgivenesses, teachings, have crowded so rapidly as to make me fatigued even in passing over an outline; and now I am still blessed with my husband and babe, having indeed the vigour, and courage, and strength of nature withered, but knowing that God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. I have a strange longing to meet my sweet Margaret Ann. She was the only one who never knew her mother, for whom I never knew a mother's peculiar privilege of watching, and waking, and comforting. The only ministry of my hands for her lovely body was laying her in her last narrow bed."

A scrap from a letter to her husband, written in 1838, shows how in his Christian course she helped him by encouraging him to seek always *first* the kingdom of heaven before earthly advantage.

"This is the time for not seeking our own in anything; and, my beloved husband, there is not one thing you have counted dear, and which you yield up and cease from pursuing for Christ's sake, that will not make you a hundred-fold more honourable in my sight, and make me feel richer than if you were possessed of untold gold.

"Dear Stewart, what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to the Lord. This is no time to be having a name, and a praise, and a possession. Wait till the time comes—you are an 'heir of *God*.' Let the remembrance of the enduring substance make you willing for the shadow to come or go."

And again:—

"I think you will be glad of a wee word to reach you on Monday, and cheer you in beginning your drudgery work; and as you feel that the heart's desire of God's children is just expressive of God's desire, which He is able to gratify, it will strengthen you to know that my mouth was filled with petitions for you last night. After praying for you, both body and spirit, in the family, I went to bed, thinking of you and all that concerns you; and one breath of prayer succeeded another, till your personal interest became merged in God's interest . . . and more than ever the actual results of your present mission, *for time*, became less and less important in comparison of the grand end and aim of doing God's will. . . .

"Dearest Stewart, M—— is just gone, and her going has hindered me from writing, so it is a poor bit to send you. But just to help you to say, One thing have I desired of the Lord, and *that* will I seek after—just the pleasing Him—the making His heart glad! What *could* be *gain* to a man, at the expense of grieving such a God?

"Your wee lamb is like a bee in the sun. The rest are all well."

A few words about her father, written February 9th, 1839, give a little idea of the intensity of Mary Ker's affections as a daughter.

"Mr. —— would tell you of my happy, precious baby, and that I am much better, and my dear father well. He has recovered the effects of his illness much sooner than I have done. What a dignity there was in his perfect patience, his touching consideration for me, and his gentle acquiescence in every requirement, without a thought of self! It was soothing even once to have

ministered at such a sick-bed, even amid the heart-thrilling anxiety attending his condition. The immense value of such a possession seemed just to increase in proportion to the nearness of the dreaded stroke, that would so entirely desolate this earth to us, and leave it without point or centre; and yet, the abiding hope of His coming, who is the Resurrection and the Life, changes the aspect of such events. For the sake of the heathen, for the sake of the field whence the first-fruits are taken that the Lord may bless the whole, for the sake of His glory, Who is worthy of all *dominion* and praise, for the breaking of the oppressor's yoke and letting the captive taste his freedom, surely we are constrained to cry, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

In 1839, at Bankhead, Partick, near Glasgow, on July 16th, another son gladdened the parents' hearts.

The following letter, though long, is too full of interest and too characteristic of her lively mind and earnest soul to be omitted. It is written to the friend to whom several of the letters about her children are addressed. Robert Paisley was a Doctor of Divinity in the Church of Scotland, an accomplished scholar, and a beautiful and saintly character. He delighted to send his sermons to Mary Ker for her judgment about them, and in many ways she seems to have given him motherly counsel. There is in the letter a passage of great value touching the oneness of the service in domestic matters, and the training of children, with service for the church.

"MANCHESTER, *Dec. 25th*, 1839.

"My dear Sir,—It may seem strange to say, that *one* reason for my writing to-day, is, that I am very unable for anything else; but so it is. I have had a very severe attack of pain in my head, and as writing requires

less exertion than anything I can do with my hands or head, I am generous enough to bestow this useless sort of time on my correspondents, till I am able for greater energy of mind or body.

"I daresay you will find that a willing ear is all I need to induce me to enlarge on a subject so interesting to me as my joyful sweet little companion. My last report only related to the expression of her natural life and intelligence. . . . I meant to speak of my 'tender grapes,' the fruit of this vine, which I believe are the greatest refreshment God finds in this wilderness. The majestic simplicity of an infant's faith is often brought before me in Mary Ann. For instance, yesterday she said, 'Mary Ann will read when your head better, mamma. God can make your head better.' I said, 'Will you ask God to do so?' She laid her head on my arm, and said, 'Oh God, make mamma's head better,' and then looking up with such triumph, said, 'Now mamma, your head well.' One day before she had done the same, and came and asked me shortly if my head was well; when I said, not quite well, she said, 'Speak to God more.' This is her constant feeling, even about children she has never seen, who are sick in the neighbourhood. Her love enables her to appropriate their distresses as her own, and whenever she has 'told God' she seems to feel relieved, as if all was well. She got a little toy, of a shepherd and lambs, and was asking what the shepherd did; I told her, knowing she had never heard the term, and then asked, 'Do you know who is the Good Shepherd?' At once she answered, 'Jesus.' 'Has He got any sheep?' 'Yes, Papa a sheep, and Mamma a sheep, and Dunn, and Bob, and all a people.' 'And has He any lambs?' '*Yes Mamma, Big Baby* a wee lamb to Jesus.' And now she can repeat so sweetly,

'He shall gather them in His arms,' etc. I don't know if you recollect at Bankhead her eagerness to have on her '*blue bonnet*,' which was always a kind of a pledge of a drive, or going to see Grandpapa, or some such joyful event. One day she said, 'All a children happy, happy, that are with Jesus; all a children with Jesus have *blue frocks*.' I traced this to her blue bonnet, and thought it a beautiful indication of her feeling that they were enjoying the greatest delight of which she had conceived. . . . One night I heard her say, 'When the sun goes away he goes to Jesus, and when the sun comes back Jesus comes in the sun.' . . . Generally when she goes to bed she says, 'Now mamma, tell Big Baby about God.' Last night it was, 'Sing Big Baby a song about God, and a song about Jesus. Sing "He makes me down to lie."' Daily and hourly expressions of this kind might be multiplied, but what strikes me more is, when I tell her that she has done something that I don't like, she replies, 'Mary no do that again mamma, *because* 'ou (you) speak to God to make Mary a good lassie;' and if she is very eager about anything, and I forbid her touching it, she leaves it, and runs up saying, '*Now* mamma, God make Mary a good wee lassie.' If at any time, which is very, very rare, she cries when not allowed to have her own way, her first word is, in the midst of her tears, as she clings round my neck, 'Speak to God, mamma; speak to God;' and after a word or two of prayer her face looks up beaming with joy. . . . When her papa came back she said, 'Oh, mamma, you spoke to God to bring papa back safe, and God "brought papa back to his darling again;"' quoting from one of her rhymes. Now I think I have shown my full confidence in your interest in Big Baby, and may pass on to something else. It comforted me to hear of

the little Pellets—I believe their mother sleeps in Jesus, and although in this day of Sadducean scepticism about angel or spirit, such a thought would be branded as heretical, I think she may still be employed in guarding them from evil and teaching the good. Who conveyed the revelation of God's mind to John?

"Few things stir the heart more deeply or cause an intenser longing for the appearing of Him, who is our life, when death itself shall die, than the thought of such little '*sensitive plants*' being exposed to the rough blast of this world, without the sheltering bower of a mother's heart. It is true the 'creative fountain of all maternal affection' remains in God, but then the Church has so little fellowship in the mind of her Lord that He has in most cases to ask in vain, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for Me?' to minister My love to the lambs, to be My hand to gather them and 'carry them,' and yet, whoso ministers to such, most truly ministers to Jesus, and hence the *ungodliness* of people speaking of their domestic concerns and occupations as *hindrances* to them in serving God. The person who cannot see God in His ordinances of parent and child, etc., will not see God in His ordinances of pastor and flock, or king and people.

"The Bible rule of 'whereunto we have already attained,' etc., limits one's range of communication so much in the present Babel, that I quite understand your pleasure in meeting with any one who will *converse* instead of *contend* about religious truths.

"I do not now even attempt to understand the relative position of the parties in the Church of Scotland; they are trying to mend their nets, which cannot be mended, instead of leaving all and following Jesus. The Lord has sent them many of His servants, to tell them of His love to all men, of His having come in the flesh, our

flesh, for there is but one, of His having given the Holy Ghost to *abide with us and to be in us*, and many other precious things, and they have cast them out of the vineyard, wounding some, how deeply! And when now and for years they have agreed to say 'My Lord delayeth His coming!' is it any wonder that they should be found smiting the menservants and judging each other, instead of obeying Jesus! Oh! their condition is one to be wept over, to be prayed for, to be spoken of to God more than to men. Nevertheless, I hope, and rejoice to believe, there are many whose souls shall be given them for a prey, and that now, at the eleventh hour, God will compel many, many to come in, and taste and see that He is gracious. You say 'What is this turmoil of Church and State to end in?' Do you recollect that—I will overturn, overturn, overturn, *till He comes*, Whose right it is, and I will give it to Him. In reply to your words, 'This is not the time to sit down and sigh,' I will tell you a *parable.*

"Last Wednesday I got a letter to say my husband would sail on Tuesday night and so he *might* be with me on Wednesday. The first outward expression was to tell the household the good news, next to inform some kind neighbours, who had been sending to enquire; then each in their own department set about having everything as their master would like, and were so intent on pleasing him they had no time to think of each other except to help forward. Bob had warm chocolate ready, Jessie had supper laid on the tray, slippers toasting by the fire, and the very door was *unlocked* (a usual precaution in the evening as it opened from without) that Mr. Ker might even not *require to knock;* well then we remained, sometimes looking out at the window, and sometimes trying to be patient, but he came not that night, having

a dreadful passage of two nights at sea; nevertheless, our faith and expectation were the *mainspring* of all orderly active, cheerful occupation in the house, keeping it *as it always should be.* Now you will not have much difficulty in seeing how the sure and certain hope of the Master's return, *how soon* we know not, should, and *would,* if it had been held fast, have kept the Church standing perfect and complete in all God's will, and having done all to stand—how? not in idleness, but arrayed in the whole armour of God, every part of which would be *felt* to be needful if the Church had not gone over to the enemy—this armour is for the *Body* [the Church]—if any one member—one man—thinks he can wear the *whole armour*—then would he be equal to his Lord. It is for the Body, and it is well for those who are keeping the unity of the Body, that they may share in the defence which cannot be had in separation from it. But now I must really conclude, for not being now in your parish, I have no claim to so much of your time. My little son is rioting on my knee, and intends that he should be my sole object of attention at present.

"My husband joins in kind regards. This is packet day or he would send you a line, but he is so busy, that I have been acting as clerk, and am quite 'au fait' in all the *linens* and *drills* and *coffee bagging* and such like articles of trade.

"Believe me yours sincerely,

"MARY KER."

A few weeks later she writes to the same correspondent:—

"SEEDLY GROVE, *Feb. 2nd,* 1840.—The storm has again come, and as long as Satan holds his present place storms shall not cease, though, blessed be God, Satan

cannot hinder even the stormy wind from fulfilling His word—but it has come in such a way as to preclude the possibility of my resuming my correspondence. My two darling children were smitten with sickness in one day. At first we thought it measles, but it did not prove so. The fever and other symptoms were severe, and for five or six nights we were not an hour in bed ; but it pleased God to bless the means used and to hear and acknowledge His own ordinance, the prayers of the elders of the Church, and He has graciously raised them up, and my precious Mary looks to-day as bright and blooming as if the hand of sickness had not touched her, and most truly tribulation to her wrought both patience and experience. One night she had the ear-ache and could rest nowhere. She covered her ears with her own little hands and lay in her papa's arms while he walked up and down. Every now and then she said, 'Papa, speak to God to make Mary's wee ear better' ; and when many times this was repeated, she removed her hand and felt the pain really gone, I shall never forget the expression with which she said, 'Now papa, God make a wee ear better.' Dunn has been very ill all the time, and to-night, when Mary Ann was jumping on her knee, I said, 'Be gentle, for Dunn's head is very bad,' she said, 'Mary be gentle, gentle, and God make Dunn's head well, for God made Mary's wee ear better, and Mary *knows* that God made it well.'"

The children were so much with their mother that almost insensibly they fell into her habits of thought touching religious things so far as they could understand. She had a strong and unwavering belief that Christian parents have to exhibit to their children the reflection of the unseen Father's heart. She could not understand parents delegating the education of their

children to others. She admitted that it might be needful to have assistance in imparting intellectual knowledge, but she allowed no plea for mothers giving up to others the religious and moral training of their offspring, when they could possibly undertake it themselves. The idea was antagonistic to every natural and spiritual feeling of the mother's heart which dwelt in her. Not that she would have thought it right under her own circumstances to do only one thing, and she often visited the sick and those children whose mothers, through toil, and want, and inability, were less able to minister to them spiritually and mentally.

She also found time to give her mind to the movements, intellectual, moral and religious, going on in the world. She much enjoyed the society of intellectual people, and was, as we should expect, fond of books. The atmosphere of her circle was full of life and its interests were world-wide. Several of her brothers lived in India and Canada. One of these, William Dunlop, was an early contributor to *Frazer's Magazine.* Her eldest brother, John Dunlop, of Gairbraid, was among the first to start a Temperance Society in Scotland. Another brother, Alexander Murray Dunlop, M.P., was well known for his interest in public questions, specially those affecting the moral and physical welfare of the people. Her husband's family took the lead in promoting Sabbath Schools, Temperance, and other philanthropic works in their own neighbourhood. One of his sisters was the wife of the late Professor A. J. Scott of Owen's College, "one of the most original thinkers of the present century."

Mary Ker's work for the Church was no hindrance to her care for her children. She could pray for the flock of Christ, while she tended her babes. And she was

procuring a blessing for them through the invigoration which came to her own soul when she joined the Lord's people in united worship. This she eagerly did whenever she had opportunity, on week days as well as on the Sabbath.

Often, through illness, she was confined to her room, and then the children had free access to her, and many of her letters were written with her little ones tumbling about her on the bed. The following extract from a letter shows how, in the midst of her children, she gathered spiritual instruction for herself out of the simplest things. It is dated Oct. 18th, 1840, and is an acknowledgnent of a letter from Dr. Paisley to her little girl.

"At every one of your questions in the letter, Mary Ann always exclaimed, 'Tell Mea,' and she has all the affecting story of Little Watch by heart. Faithful creature! shaming and reproving man who takes his ease and enjoys himself in his *Master's absence*, keeping no guard over his Master's house, but accepting every offered gift, even from his Master's enemy. If one learns nothing else in seeing the manifestation of God's purpose in all creation, animate and inanimate, at least they must be humbled by the fact so pressed on us, that the ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master's crib, but *Israel doth not know.* Where is the spiritual faculty which is shown out in the instinct that would have turned that faithful dog's misery into transport, if he had heard his master's footstep, however distant? Creation manifests invisible truth, and believing that different parts are constructed to represent different invisible realities, it is full of interest that the whole tribe of *serpents* sleep with their eyes wide open—that their jaws are not knit together like other animals, but

each separately fastened to the head so that they can *devour* bodies three times as large as their own; and it is also stated that the power by which they entrance their victims, as it were, is the *spell* of *terror*. I have been led to this by your letter to Mary Ann, and for writing which my husband said a man ought to be made a principal; but now I must come to your two letters to me, for which I thank you."

Next follows the description of her distress, touching the needs of the Church. We have previously alluded to Mary Ker's care for the suffering ones. She thus describes the work of visitation of the poor which often occupied her.

"My *company* at present dwells most in *holes* and *garrets* (thirteen such visits I paid yesterday to sick and suffering members of Christ").

And again:

"6, SEEDLY GROVE, *near* MANCHESTER,
"*Nov. 22nd*, 1840.

"My dear Friend,—When the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, the body being covered with wounds and bruises, etc., the call to weep is not confined to place or time. I have been in nine houses to-day, in thirteen the other day, among the poor, the sick, the dying; and it was but too easy to weep when I saw in one place an exhausted woman, who had never been in bed during the night, with twins in her arms, the youngest of eight children, sitting watching her dying husband. I thought of the words—

'Who can help praying now?
My soul is on the stretch, and busy with her God
About some big request, I cannot utter
Nor comprehend.'

But the Lord knoweth the mind of the spirit expressed in those unutterable groanings which *impotent pity* wrings from the oppressed heart. It would be maddening if one did not know God's purpose of love, and might not rest on the anchor amid these billows. . . . Oh! how His heart is straitened in His members. The Lord give you to be enlarged into the largeness of Jesus, that you may be as His hand pouring in oil and wine; and out of His mouth interpreting to men what is in their hearts, and ministering of His love."

The remainder of the note refers to her father, then in his last illness.

"Since last Friday I have been kept in the utmost suspense about my beloved father, and have written to ask if we may go, without the risk of injuring or exciting him, but I cannot hear till Wednesday; and, as I said to my husband, I feel as unequal to the sorrow of seeing him so changed, as I do to stay away from him. Mercifully, he does not suffer, and his calm and cheerful and kind manner and feeling continue the same as formerly made him so dignified in suffering."

Owing to her own illness, and then to the illness of her nurse, Mary Ker could not be present with her father during his last days. On December 26th, 1840, she writes to a friend of his departure, and gives a beautiful estimate of his character.

"You were not aware when you wrote, that my beloved father had fallen asleep in Jesus, so calmly, that in writing, one of them said the appointed time having come, the pendulum of life became noiselessly still, and the spirit departed, rejoicing in the prospect of being clothed with a house from heaven. What a deep calm there is in every remembrance of him. His patience was perfected. . . . His whole condition,

his expressions of perfect peace in Jesus often repeated, and his repose of spirit, reminded me more of my Acandy than anything I have heard for long. I had the same intimation of his absence from the body that I have had in other cases, in my spirit, before we heard the fact, and since then God has graciously given me such apprehensions of the oneness of the disembodied spirits and those on earth; such faith in the Lord's purpose to use them in carrying out His work of grace; such consciousness of the communion of saints, and of the way in which spirit makes itself intelligible to spirit, or, as the little child said to its mother of the disembodied state, 'Then I will think to you and you will think to me'; that at times I seem to have gained instead of lost, and I try not to think of this world now so desolated, or of all the tender, unwearied, more than mother's love to me, which made his house and heart such a home. The sunny side of his soul was always turned to us, and much, much have I learned of the Invisible Father through His faithful witness and representation. When I used to be wearied with the sectarianism and prejudice of many, what a rest I always found it to go to him alone and tell him of God's various dealings of grace, especially in children or those in exalted stations, and whether God was seen in miraculous power or the secret embraces of love, his catholic spirit sympathized in all the good, and rejoiced with tears of joy that the name of the Lord was glorified."

She writes to another correspondent on the same day:

"My father's departure, and my not having seen him is *one* of the events that enter into all one's future existence, and become indelible. I could scarcely have thought that any event but one could so have affected

the aspect of all things. . . . The blessed book is now withdrawn from my sight, written not with ink and pen, but with the spirit of the Lord, in which I have read more legibly than anywhere else the record of the *Father's heart*—the disinterested, unattracted, unwearied love, and the home is now desolated, which amid all my wanderings presented the type of the rest for which we wait. But I do not allow myself to dwell on the past, but in the joyful assurance that we shall meet him and honour him *as our father*, and be able to give vent in ways suitable to our changed condition to all those emotions of love, and gratitude, and admiration, which now unoccupied in act, seem to heave and almost overwhelm the heart, even amid the calm of knowing that in one *feeler* of my being I can never be hurt again, because he is where sorrow cannot follow."

A few months later the clinging, tender heart was again wounded by another parting. She writes of the death of her brother, Captain Robert Graham Dunlop, May, 1841:—

"The week of rest and revival at Fairfield was a gracious preparation for what was before me. The day after my return the sad, sad tidings reached me of the death of a most affectionate and very favourite brother. When I was so long ill he was suffering dreadfully from his many wounds received in battle, which I always dressed, and he read to me, and sat with me, and talked with me—but no, I shall say no more—of those suffering hours spent together! And now that the type and representative is taken from me, I seem to discern more really how truly Jesus, the Brother, was manifesting Himself to me in all His unwearied, disinterested and tender expressions of brotherly love. I may just mention one. When I was

going to join my husband in Rio, dear Robert was so concerned for my comfort, that laying aside as it were his rank as a naval officer, he wrote to Liverpool offering to take command of any merchant ship, and take charge of the cargo home without remuneration, that he might secure for me all the comfort that kindness could obtain, and when it was found that captains were already appointed, he wished to go to South America with me and return immediately, 'just to see me safe in Stewart's hands.'"

A little reference to her mother, in a letter written three years later, may be appropriately inserted here.

"To amuse you I send a curl of *my* baby hair that was sent among relics of home worked by my dear mother's own hand. You must send it back, for Stewart is so childishly delighted to get it. There was a bracelet also of my mother's own hair, which has made me live over again Cowper's poem to his Mother's Picture. In some respects it has been winter to me since I saw the sunshine of her smile. She was all our world while we had her—the embodying of all our ideas of loveliness —and her presence made every scene indelible to us. My first conscious feelings about eternity were awakened by seeing her kneeling alone in prayer when all others were in bed. 'Her children arise and call her blessed.'"

The following letter to Dr. Paisley is a charming acknowledgment of kindness done to the children. It is not a small thing to Him, who numbers the hairs of our heads, that young hearts should thus be made glad. And it is also according to God's order when the joy of giving becomes almost as great as the joy of receiving, for we are told in Scripture that, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and young children are apt to learn this lesson when taught by a mother's example.

"*March 24th*, 1841.

"My dear Friend,—From various causes, the parcels left for us with Mr. T—— only reached us this morning, and I cannot let a day pass, without acknowledging your kind remembrance of my little lambs. Mary Ann's delight at seeing the little set of tea cups was very great and perhaps mine was not less, though otherwise expressed; for a few nights ago, a little girl came to play with Mary Ann and brought her own doll and tea set, and when I saw the pleasure they gave, my first impulse was to buy Mary Ann a set—but I thought it is not time for me to indulge myself in this way for my child when many mothers here see their children seek bread, and there is none; and so when your kind gift came in there was a secret in it to my heart, from God, that was more touching than is sometimes read in what we call larger things—and I hope my darling may learn from receiving so largely both necessaries and enjoyments, also in her measure to devise liberal things. We lately found a little child who had been burned, lying on a bed, and the moment Mary saw her she said, 'Mamma, I will send her the orange Mrs. Gray gave to Mary, and "Cock Robin," to look at the pictures, and will Jesus make her well?' This morning she was in our room when my husband was reading, the 46th Psalm, and I did not know she was listening, and when he came to that verse, 'The Lord will help her and that right early'—she looked up and said, 'To-day? Will He do it to-day'? She wants to send you some little Poems to read that a friend of mine sent her the other day. Pray return them soon, as Mary Ann likes to hear them very often. She says she has 'two thanks to send for every tea cup—and Eddy is a funny boy—for he kissed his ball and sung it to sleep like a wee baby, that was what Eddy did.'"

Besides caring for the interests of the Church and the training of her children, Mary Ker's sympathies were, as ever, going forth to those in trouble. In a letter to her husband, who was in Rio for a few weeks, she mentions an Italian, a friend of his, who had been confined many years in the Austrian dungeons for political offences, and we have a glimpse of the tenderness of Mary Ker's heart. The letter is written in 1841.

"The liberation of poor —— is a real and great deliverance to me, for I was bound with him. The thought of him brought a *condition* of sorrow that lasted when the thought had ceased! Oh, what a loosing that will be from the prison of the grave for which Christ prays, 'Bring my soul out of prison, and it shall praise Thee.' My very existence is a prayer for it."

She goes on to speak of her visits to the sick: "I have seen seven patients to-day: one baby entirely relieved from great suffering. Surely the Lord girds them, though many of them know it not; for their meek endurance of severe, continued, and unheeded suffering, chiefly from starvation, I really believe is marvellous, What a sunbeam in their darkness the voice of sympathy seems. On Wednesday I was asked to see a dear child, older than Mary Ann, just dying of croup, but past all effect from medicine; however, I went every two hours, and did what I could. The child was under such a pressure of suffering that I never heard it speak, and did not think it observed what was going on. At nine at night, I was just going out, when I met a woman at the door, coming from the house, to say that they did not expect me on so cold a night, and that she was no better. When she heard them sending a message to me, she beckoned her grandmother over to the bed, and making a great effort to speak, she told them to thank me for

coming so often to see her. You may think it a trifling thing to write, but a message from Victoria would just have been a shadow to the value of this expression from the dying child. I had felt so intensely, seeing everything fail to relieve her suffering, that the thought of my attention having comforted her heart, was more than a reward for all I did, or suffered; and besides that, I would not have missed the wakeful, prayerful night I passed for her, for months of ease and enjoyment. Her suffering ceased yesterday morning, and I have a strange mysterious interest and satisfaction in ministering to any one just on their leaving the body. I would scarcely like to put my feeling in words, but it is the likest thing to sending a message to you from home by a person going to Rio; and it is like being put in the place of being remembered, when they, leaving all that mars God's will in them, breathe only for the fulfilling of His purposes of blessing. . . . Surely there will be some peculiar joy in meeting, in our immortal bodies, those to whom we were sent to minister in the last sufferings and sorrows of mortality. . . . I went last night and saw the bereaved mother, and heard the sweetest account of the dear child whose toils are o'er, and her unceasing cry for the kingdom begun. However feeble the cry on earth, we must remember how few of the Church are in the body. All out of the body must be loving His appearing. . . . I have been thinking much too of the vials being filled with the prayers of the saints, and pouring out such judgments as their contents. It is even so at this present time in the history of individuals, for I can trace so many prayers that have entered God's ear, and caused Him to lift His hand to smite the flesh within us till it seemed as if He meant to consume us as well as our enemy."

Referring to one of the sick poor in Dr. Paisley's parish, she writes :—

"There is something peculiarly refreshing in hearing of the secret sustaining power of Jesus. 'I am poor and needy, yet the *Lord thinketh upon me*' is the joyful experience of many of whom the world is not worthy, and therefore they are unknown and despised. Such hidden ones as you speak of are the vital parts of the body, preserving its life ; they are precious in the Lord's sight. We cannot refrain from indulging in the pleasure of ministering, in however small a degree, to the bodily necessities of this member of Jesus, and beg you will expend ten shillings for us in any way that may be most for her comfort. If she knows that we have heard of her, give her our love in the Lord. I hope she will remember us and ours when she says 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' I daresay she has learned that God's will is the good that changes all things into one."

In the summer of 1841, she gives to the same friend a picture of her little girl in two or three words.

"Mary Ann is trying to remember to say 'Please,' and 'Thank you,' as papa told her: and really she is most wonderfully yielding to Eddy, but her love of fun and exuberant spirits carry her quite away sometimes."

Again in October of the same year, she says :—

"My pets are blooming. Mary sends two and four kisses, and she has two messages ; one is 'to tell him about *the doll*,' and the other is, 'to tell him to come, and, if he would come, Eddy would just laugh for joy, and I would laugh for fun that Mr. Paisley had come.' "

The following note we give intact. It shows how full and wide were the sympathies of her large heart :—

"BOWDEN DOWNS, *Feb. 4th*, 1842.

"I came here with my dear children last Saturday, and having been very poorly myself and my little Eddy not so strong as he was and inseparable from me, I have not had a moment for writing. They are one at each side at this moment, saying, 'I have best love and kisses to send to Mr. Paisley,' 'and *I* have best love and kisses to send to Mr. Paisley.' Mary Ann is perfectly well, and Eddy is already deriving benefit from the change, and will soon I hope be as well as 'my Sweetie,' as he now calls his sister. His first request this morning, on opening his eyes was, 'Mamma, tell me all that God gives Eddy;' and when I had gone over some things, he added, 'and mamma, God gave me my wee counters,' a toy he values very much.

"The furniture will all be in the house at Bowden Vale to-day, and to-morrow night we hope to sleep there. It is a most *meek* looking place, with very little of the pride of life in its aspect, and I feel its quietness to be a great gift from God, involving a great responsibility of stewardship. I wonder if there is anything we profess to believe which we realize so little in practice, as that 'we are not our own, and that nought of the things we possess are our own.' Not less solemn, surely, is the responsibility of having been led through such chambers of imagery and shown greater and greater abominations as in Manchester. I suppose that nothing can lift off the weight of sorrow it has brought but the coming of Him who will cast out of His kingdom all things that offend. If you had a shadow of the feeling about a large town that I have—or could understand the exhaustion of being subject in body and mind to the sort of high pressure engine of which their many horse-powers is but the visible form—it would need a messen-

ger as express and an urgency as great to lead you to Liverpool, or any such place, as it needed to carry Lot away from the Sodom of his day. The Lord needs witnesses greatly in such places, but where are the men in these days of such metal as to stand the fiery trial? I shall return your sermons in a day or two. I allowed a friend to see them who is much interested in the subject. Express my love and sympathy to Miss ——, and pray remind her that He who cannot lie has said *your sorrow* shall be turned into joy, and *when?* My husband returned from London on Tuesday morning, and brought me accounts of many interesting circumstances connected with the Queen. God seems to have given her a woman's and a mother's heart, and a great blessing in her husband. A few days after the Prince's birth she asked permission from the Doctor to hear reading, and when he objected she said, 'The Prince is always in the habit of reading the Bible to me, and I should like very much to hear him again.'—he always prays with her also. The fact of a king coming to this country for the express purpose of attending one of the sacraments, and the Queen's reason for asking him, 'that he was a religious man,' is like better times than we have had for long. Our address will be Bowden Vale, Cheshire.

"Believe me yours very sincerely,

"MARY KER."

Mary Ann's opening mind, upon which every new thought and event and scene made a vivid impression, was a daily joy to her mother. Mary Ker writes of the two children, February 13, 1842:—

"Their bodies are in full vigour and their minds quite as active and sweet."

A month later she tells of the attentions of her little girl during an illness.

"I cannot resist some notices of my sweet Mary Ann that will be worth sending if they impart to you even a small measure of the comfort ministered to me by her love. I have suffered much less since coming here, but on Thursday my head was dreadful; and when papa had breakfasted and started, I took refuge in bed. My little lamb came immediately, and after holding my head and kissing it, she went into the next room, returning after a time with her face quite beaming, and saying, 'I have something to whisper to you, mamma: God will make you better: I was asking God to do it, and to keep Eddy well; and then mamma, I was walking about, and thinking about God, and I was thinking things about myself that I could not understand; but I'll tell my mammy, and she can explain them. I was thinking that God had made me very happy and good to-day, because you were so ill, that I might comfort you. And have you great delight in your children, mamma? And I asked God to make me *gooder* to-morrow than I am to-day! And then she knelt down, and prayed again for more love, etc., etc., and remained with me nearly the whole day without disturbing me, speaking in the gentlest whisper. Once I heard her ask Jessie for some water, saying, 'I want to attend to mamma's plants, for she is not able, and I'll save her the trouble.' Her whole trouble about my illness was the more striking to me, because my watchful, wakeful nights began when I was only double her age, sleeping in my mother's room during her last illness; and the first time I recollect praying with reality and intensity was for her relief, kneeling in the dark and cold nights. To-day she said, 'Mamma, may I make a little prayer

after dinner, for I had it in my heart when I was out. The prayer was: 'O God, I thank Thee for putting it into papa's heart to bring me a paint-box and paints in it. I pray Thee to help me from speaking about my meat, that I may please papa; and from ever teasing E——; and make all children love each other.' She is going to write to you some day, and was much delighted to get your letter; and she is hemming a pocket handkerchief for papa. . . . [Here follow more of her words.] 'How is this little housie the most beautiful thing in all the world to papa? It is because his wife and his two wee children are in it, and because he knows there are little eyes watching for him? Joy, joy, I see him coming; and oh! mamma, when Jesus comes it will be joy for ever. How are you now, mamma? for papa will ask at the door, and I want to be the teller.[1] . . . I can understand quite well, mamma, how you are kind when you don't give us things, as well as when you give us things; for God gave us to you to keep us from things if He knew they would hurt us. Did you know that God could be kind when He took your children away, mamma? And were you very lonely without them? And did God comfort you with His own love? And did you know that He would keep them safer and happier than you could, mamma? And were you glad, glad when He sent your own little girl to comfort you? Oh! mamma, it joys my very heart to be a comfort to my own mamma. And would you be glad yet, mamma, if I was to go to Jesus? I would, indeed, like to go. And I would like papa

[1] "On hearing of the slaying of Goliath by David, she asked thoughtfully! 'Had the giant any wee lassies waiting for him till he came home?'"

and E—— to go too; and when the Lord comes we'll all be together, all mamma's four children.'"

Only a few weeks after this letter was written a heavy cloud overshadowed the household, for both the children were prostrate with fever.

From Bowdon Vale the mother writes a short note, dated April 8th, 1842:—

"Dearest ——, I take a few minutes, while watching my poor exhausted little Mary, of whose fever —— wrote, to tell you that she has now got the turn, but her weakness is so great we cannot understand what she says often. E—— had less fever, too, last night, but he scarcely gets any sleep. Mary's patience, affection, and gentleness are quite touching. . . . When I asked which of two things she would have—'Everything pleases me, mamma, everything that's good for me.' She wanted a lily, and then said: 'Although I am so ill, I would not ask for one if I thought papa did not like them to be plucked.' . . . He is so willing to make His servants what He would have them to be, prepared to help His little ones. Surely in one department I have proved this fully just now, for my lambs took ill when I had to be helped upstairs from perfect weakness. Since last Sunday night I have only two nights been asleep at all, and have had E—— in my arms, generally sitting up all night. Yet the Lord would have them comforted with a mother's comfort, and lets not my weakness stand in the way. I am not worse now than before. Pray for them and us, and believe me ever your very affectionate sister

"MARY KER."

On the 15th of the same month she gives the following inexpressibly touching record:—

"My dearest ——, It was among the countless sweet, significant expressions of my cherished little companion when I was ill: 'Mamma, would you rather have the pain yourself, than that your little children should have it? Is it the kindest thing God can do to let *you* suffer rather than see your little children suffer?' And now, under deeper feeling than the body can know, I can give the same answer; God knows I count not the sorrow, since sorrow and sin can no more reach my precious treasure. I told you in my note of her perfected patience, sweetness, and love, and perhaps some of her expressions. On Saturday the fever seemed abated, but no lowering of her pulse; and from the appearance of her eye, larger, brighter, and fuller, I feared the disease going to the head; but she had no suffering, and could take whatever was given her. The last thing she asked for was a rose I had brought her, which she held and admired some time, and gave me back. She often looked upward sweetly, and, raising her hand, pointed steadily in the same direction, and followed some object with that full, intelligent, satisfied look that tells of shadows broken through, and substance realized, so like my little Acandy, that I saw what was coming. The Lord made a great calm, and suffered no jarring thought to mar the sacred harmony between His doing and His creature's will. I said to Him,—

'O Lord my God! do Thou Thy holy will,
I will lie still.
I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm,
And break the charm
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest.'

"I rejoiced to remind Him that she was His more than mine, and if He would take her, He needed not to wait

for my consent to do as He would with His own. Again and again she pointed upward with brightening gaze. . . . She held my hands in hers, and drew me near to kiss her, and she was gone! and she has left a fragrance of holy love and joy that may well embalm our hearts till the time which was the point and centre of all her existence—the coming of the Lord. The Sunday before she took ill was the anniversary of my first and last parting from my sweet Acandy, and we were talking all day of the resurrection; her interest was intense: 'Oh! mamma, that will be the spring of springs; there will be the plants of God's garden, mamma, and they will never die; that will be the glorious spring.' She now enjoys the repose of a planet in its orbit, the rest of eternal unison with the will of God. I feel as if you had scarcely known her, so marvellously she grew in spiritual stature, so exquisite her unfolding beauty, so enlarged her perception of love. I can scarcely imagine, on earth, a joy more bright and unmingled than Stewart and I had in her, and she in us, especially during our two months' peaceful retirement here. 'Oh mamma,' she would say often, 'I may well thank God for such a papa; there never was so kind a papa made on this earth;' (and then, with a lower tone and deeper look) 'there is just one kinder, that is God, mamma. Has He more love than all fathers and mothers? Is it just His love they love with?' And then clinging round me, and between every kiss varying her name for me, to try and give vent to her overflowing love: 'Oh my own mamma, my sweet mamma, my dear mamma, my gentle mamma, my meek mamma, my kind mamma. Many, many a time I thank God for giving me you for my mamma; it gladdens me with all the gladness that is in my heart.' Her activity of mind was increased, her desire of know-

ledge boundless; but with this, such a deep repose, such a sufficiency for herself, that for hours she sometimes scarcely spoke for more than a few minutes. I lay often on a sofa in the sun, and she wandered like a breeze among the walks and flower-beds, 'singing to the larks' or 'always thinking on God,' as she said; and then with overflowing heart she would come to me, saying, 'Oh! mamma, I never could have conceived of such a God as God is!' and then she would thank Him that He was such a God. Oh! my sweet, sweet child! what a blessing has been mine, in having anything so lovely to cherish and admire, and, in the fulness of its beauty, to present before my God! He found our blessed child as 'grapes in the wilderness,' and He has been made welcome to gather His own. . . . Much, much could I write of her, but on Sunday I became seriously ill, and have been confined to bed ever since. My lonely little E—— is better. Oh! pray that God may fill his heart. He has lost in her exquisite tenderness and sympathy, to whose arms he always fled for comfort, what none of us can fully make up; and pray for us, dearest ——, that we may fully learn all that God would teach by having set a little child in the midst of us —pray that we may not despise His chastening or faint under His rebuke. Much she loved you, and remembered you with unchanged affection, and with great joy she cut little papers to send you seeds, which I never had strength to put into them.

"I am weak, weak and tired, yet I have written this that the spirit of praise may be stirred up amid your heaviness, that you may know—

'There is a secret in the ways of God
With His own children, which none others know beside';

and that there is in love that which counts not its own condition, if its object be blessed. Your much attached sister

"MARY KER."

The note of praise in the following letter is full of blessed teaching :—

"I desire to awaken your thanksgivings as well as your prayers. If *in everything* we are to give thanks, because each thing is our Father's will concerning us, surely there is in that will such a good, that falling in with it gives stability and rest, whatever it appoints. Wherefore, though to us belong shame and confusion of face that there should be a need for such strokes from the hand that was pierced for our sins, yet to Him belong praises for ever: praise that we were ever blessed with the charge of a treasure to adorn with His beauty, to cherish and admire; that our spirits have been watered with the living stream of her love, and our hearts embalmed with the fragrance of her joy in God; and that in ripeness and beauty we have been enabled to offer willingly unto the Lord of His own: praise that such a treasure is safely lodged from sin and sorrow; and praise for her bright hope and ours of a glorious resurrection, to come how soon? . . . She was spared all suffering, and kept in such a heavenly spirit, which, as it was blessedness to witness, must have been joy to feel. The last few hours, from her looks and pointing upwards, as if shadows were passed there and realities reached, I am sure she saw what it was not possible to utter; and now nothing shall ever mar her joy. I question if ever it was granted in so short a life to minister a fuller, sweeter cup of joy than she did to us.

"Perhaps your way may be opened to come and see

us soon, and then I could tell of all the exquisite forms in which were expressed an excellence instinct with the life of glory—a perfect faith—a hope full of glory There would be much in it wherewith you might strengthen the faith of parents and your own, and make men feel how high and holy is a parent's calling, for their own teaching and that of their children. Pray for my lovely Edward. He is better, but not well yet."

Lonely hearts, who have longed for but have been denied many of the dearest joys of earth, will be soothed by Mary Ker's experiences. This may sound strangely, but there is that in her union with her God and Father, and her rest in His will through the most trying dispensations, which may well carry encouragement to any under trial. The murmuring of those Christian mothers who have lost children seems to render harder the lot of other women who have been denied these joys; for the thought will so naturally arise in those whose wills are not fully surrendered, "If there is no praise in *their* hearts for having been permitted to enjoy such precious gifts because they have been recalled, *we* may well murmur and be desolate who have been denied these blessings altogether." There will be no such feeling in dwelling upon Mary Ker's joys and losses, because there was no repining, deep as was the mental and physical suffering through which she passed.

While we believe that Mary Ker's acquiescence in God's will and her desire for the moral and religious welfare of her children can only be dwelt upon with instruction, we cannot deny that the bright little girl may have suffered from so close a union in all the interests of her mother. Being for long the only child, and able to enter into many of her mother's thoughts and feelings, the mental powers may have become, all

unconsciously to those around, too rapidly developed and matured. *Unconsciously*—for the mother carefully avoided book learning and promoted a life of much freedom and healthy activity, in order that the mind of her little girl might unfold naturally. The parents were highly intellectual and of finely strung natures, and perhaps we need not marvel that the child should inherit powers of no common order, with unusually refined and sensitive feelings; and it may have been permitted for the teaching of the many that the impress of Heaven should be so marvellously stamped upon her young heart, illuminating her entire being and increasing the natural brightness of her mind.

We cannot forbear giving quotations from a letter containing more records of Mary Ann. The letter was written after her death and is dated August 18th, 1842.

"I have no remembrance when I last wrote to you, or what I may have told you of my happy little lamb. I shall inclose some notes of her words during the last year, though they are mere occasional scraps, only written down when her papa was away, that he might know her own words. You may imagine what a joy was given to us in having a creature of such exquisite mould continually before us. The unmingled joy of her existence, beaming in every feature, and expressed in every movement with intense life and reality, were what met the eye most readily in her, combined with such gentleness and love and refinement, that it was only when quite alone with us that her mind and heart fearlessly expanded all their feelers, and the full stream of her love was poured out. There was with her incessant activity and animation, also a deep repose, a great love of being *alone with God.* To give the slightest impression of her

unwearied, considerate, tender ministry of love to me while ill would be quite impossible, or of that devotion to our slightest wish that made her watch my every look. Sometimes, when going to give her some direction, she would spring from her chair, with her beaming face, saying, 'Oh, mamma, you need not say it; I see by your eyes what you want'; and when I was not present, her scrupulous regard, even to the letter, of anything I said would sometimes have caused a smile, and now brings the tears of gratitude for the perfection in which God set before us the character of the *child* in her. She never was taught her letters, though nearly five years old; but her thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and her perception of beauty everywhere rendered every object full of interest to her.

"It was the 3rd of April (the anniversary of the day on which the body of my beloved Acandy was laid in the grave) that E—— took scarlet fever, which had prevailed everywhere for some weeks, and been very fatal. Mary Ann was at all times his chief comforter. Whenever he hurt himself or broke a toy, he ran first to her, saying, 'Comfort me, sissy'; and when she had wiped his eyes and kissed him, it was all over. Whatever she was doing, if she heard him cry she left everything, saying, 'Oh, that's E——, mamma; he will want me'; and all the way she kept calling, 'I am coming, my own lamb; sissy will comfort her own lamb.' Her whole energies were now engrossed between amusing and pleasing him, singing to him, etc., and saving me from fatigue; and the subject of her conversation with me all day was the resurrection of the body, in reference to her little brothers and sisters now asleep. She had planted a pea, and her joy at seeing the green leaves spring from the little dead-looking seed seemed quite

to assist her mind in apprehending the change when that which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power and this mortal put on immortality. . . . It was a great grace to me that I was enabled, under such bodily weakness—having been two months very ill—to attend them without intermission, night and day; but on the following day I became alarmingly ill, and continued so for long. My bodily frame has been shaken to the very foundations, and my flesh cries out for the time when our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto *His* glorious body. Yet, for the sake of my husband and my boy, I have blessed God for my restoration so far. You will remember my necessities before the Lord, who knows my frame and understands all my thoughts; and especially that if I am soon to part from those for whom alone I would wish to live I may have the faith of Jesus, ere He left those whom He loved as His own soul, to trust them wholly to the Lord's keeping, as *His*, more than mine—as safe with Him for time and for eternity. His *will* I have proved to be *the good thing* on which to feed; and that glorious hope which eclipses all joy and sorrow, enabling us to possess our souls in patience, will sustain, whether in life or death."

We give another passage of great beauty :—

"So bright and lovely has been the example set before us of the condition of a child choosing and loving our will before all else—yea, anticipating its expression —so deep a joy has been given to us in being perfectly loved and perfectly trusted, that it has given to me a heart-withering conviction of how little we have realized the endearing relationship with our gracious Father, how little we have been to Him what His love claimed, or have claimed from Him what that unchanging or

unanswered love yearns to bestow. Ah! in a world where He has nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Him, shall it not be our dearest ambition, our single desire, to make His heart glad?"

And again:—

"I do not quite understand your feelings about God's dealings with us, my dear friend. To me there is in them no darkness at all, but the darkness of separation from an object that was to my heart more cheering than the rising sun; but God knows, that because I so loved her I can rejoice that she is gone to the Father. Jesus has said, Ye now therefore have sorrow. Weeping must endure through the night; the joy cometh in the morning. I know, from the experience of ten long years, since my firstborn was laid in the grave, that bereavement is not a passing emotion, but an abiding condition—that here the blank is never to be filled, the wound never to be healed; but I know as surely that the *will* of God is meat to eat which gives a joy not to be found in any possession. I know that He can enable the heart to feel unreservedly, Good is that will, even when pierced to its very core. And although there are no stepping-stones over the waters of affliction, yet shall their swelling waves only make us cast out our anchor and wish for the day—our separations make every pulsation of life a silent prayer for the Lord's coming, and our gathering together unto Him—our wasted bodies and many pains only endear the promise of a glorious body, like unto His own. And so shall we be more than conquerors even now, and in hope be able at midnight and in our prison, to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, so that our fellow prisoners may hear, and fear and trust in His name. And therefore,

when you think of us, praise the Lord for His goodness; and seeing He is our Father, let Him have His honour."

During 1842 Mary Ker had several attacks of illness. Of one of these she says :—

"I have endured a week's martyrdom of suffering, which has worn the very flesh off my bones. I am again easier, but weak, weak, and thankful indeed that my husband was not away, for he has done little else than watch and comfort me. I often grudge the heavy share he bears of all my pain, but I should not, if we learn in suffering what we breathe in song.

Our present condition is so like the scene which precedes the opening of a royal concert. All is a mass of discordant sounds while the tuning goes on. The composer and performer alone knows when the keys are ready to realize the *idea* in his mind; and then it wants but the entrance of the royal train to awake the burst of harmony, when each note finds its appropriate place in unison with the whole. And when the Chief Musician has tuned His many-stringed instrument, being Himself at once the leader and receiver of the praise, He and His redeemed shall return to Sion with everlasting joy upon their heads; and His glorious presence shall awaken strains of harmony so stupendous, and yet so sweet, in His ears, that He has used these wonderful words to His Father, 'Thou art holy, *O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*'"

The latter part of the letter probably refers to the state of the Scotch Church, then in the throes of a great upheaving. The discord caused by the controversies going on pained her intensely, and when the disruption occurred a little later, she suffered with those

who remained, as well as with those who went forth to form another community.

In October, 1842, at Bowdon Vale, a fourth son was born. A month later she thus refers to her thoughts on the training of children:—

"With what intense interest I read the expression of your burden, as to training your children Godward. I would give something to speak face to face on this subject, and yet I am inclined to say, Be of good cheer. When I remember how God calls things that are not as though they were; when I remember the brokenness of heart and many tears with which I poured out my complaint to God, as to my utter unfitness for training that plant of exquisite beauty which He entrusted to me; and yet I am compelled to acknowledge, to the praise of His grace, that through us she learned much of Him, for the habit of her life was reaching, through us, to the heart of God as her home. Oh! He is faithful and mighty; creature weakness hinders Him not, and creature strength helps Him not. He will maintain His name of Parent, written upon you, and make you His hand to convey to *His* little ones the fulness of His fatherly heart; and the glory shall be all His own for ever. I think, if opportunity were given, that many might help each other much in this work, by the affectionate communication of their difficulties and successes, their burdens and encouragements. The first day I was able to read the Scripture for the day, after D——'s birth, was the chapter about Manoah and his wife, 'How shall we do for the child? and how shall we order him?' And I found there the grand secret, that we must *be* what we mean our children to become. I dare say dear —— would quarrel with that whole transaction, because the Lord spoke to the woman, not to Manoah;

but I do not, because while Christ speaks to headships, the Spirit speaks to the Churches: and headships might sometimes do well to listen to what the Spirit says. Oh! dear ——, there is a rest given us in being able to say of our children to God, All mine are *Thine;* and to cast the burden of His glory in them on Him. 'I am oppressed, undertake for me,' is an appeal not unheard and not unanswered by Him, who knows that without Him we can do *nothing*. So the Lord strengthen your hands and encourage your heart, and make you more and more a transparency, through which His mind may be discerned by your children, for He comes within reach of them in you. He dwells in flesh, and in flesh He will triumph gloriously."

In another letter, written in December, she again refers to the chapter relative to Samson's birth:—

"Manoah's wife was commanded to observe the regimen necessary for a Nazarite, in order that her child might be a Nazarite.[1] I believe the same law exists in respect to the moral, intellectual, and spiritual part of man's being; and thus what is required for our children shuts us up to receiving continually from God what we would have them to possess, and also presents the most powerful of all motives to the exercise of our bodily and mental powers."

Again she writes in the same month:—

"Our sins testify against us, yet He will do it for His own name's sake. We must know we are but deputies, and stand still, as it were, to see the salvation of God; and so we shall be invigorated to work, because it is

[1] There are many modern mothers who have taken the vow of the Nazarite touching intoxicating drinks for the sake of children born and unborn.

God that worketh in us. . . . Before men train plants or animals, they study their nature, habits, the conditions of their development, etc., and yet mothers give themselves but little trouble to understand the nature of their trust in any way; and after much inquiry and much thought they may come, like me, to see they have everything to learn. The whole creation is redeemed; we have the physical, moral, and intellectual being to be harmoniously developed, as well as the spiritual life cherished: what do we know of them? The physical in these days is much neglected, for people are more intent on curing disease when it comes than preserving health while they have it. I am persuaded that as each bodily organ has its appropriate object to stimulate its exercise—as light to the eye, etc. —so each moral feeling and mental faculty have their stimulants; and we can only strengthen by exercise suited to each capacity. . . . But instead of educating the whole being, it is found more easy to destroy irregularities by destroying life; and therefore children are *subdued*, not *ruled*."

The following reference to her children is from a letter to Dr. Paisley, dated Bowdon Vale, December 25th, 1842.

"I don't know what to say to you of my darling little D——, whom you will know some day I hope. At present he is the picture of placid enjoyment, with desires for spirited exertions quite unsuited to his age. In feature he does not resemble the others at present, but he recalls most vividly the precious days of my lovely Mary Ann's infancy, and of her joy over her 'wee budda' at Bankhead, and brings the heart-withering thought of her absence with an anguish that hope only can endure and the assurance that no ill can reach *her* now.

"Dearest E—— is immensely grown since you saw him, his cheeks like roses, and himself a specimen of vigour and animation. He comes prancing in sometimes, and if he finds baby sleeping he lowers his voice immediately to a whisper, and often says, 'I'm so fond of that little boy, I would not like to disturb him; I'm sure I would not like to let my little brother be hurt'; and when he calls D——, and baby looks round, he kisses him for it with such delight. The effects of his illness that were so visible when you were here are now quite overcome, and I see how needful gentleness and patience were, instead of punishment as many would have used; for sometimes when he intends to do something that he thinks I would not like he says, 'If I do it will you not be able to smile?' If I say 'No,' he leaves it, and if I look grave at anything he has done he says at once, 'I won't do it again, mamma; now smile, mamma, do smile.' He is becoming so very inquiring and intelligent that I know not how we are to keep him from exercising his brain. Nothing escapes his observation; the form, colour, use, etc., of every object is matter of interest to him, and he makes such curious use of things he has heard. 'Papa, I am thirsty; I want some water; we must get Moses to strike the rock and get us some.'

"He is often speaking of you, and I will let him send his own message when awake. This is quite a nursery report, but I know you are willing to bear with mammas in this respect; why should they not write about what fills all their thoughts, and yet we are but learning our ignorance of how to train these precious plants when our work should be going on certainly and cheerfully."

To the same, January 20th, 1843:—

"As I have the pleasant prospect of my husband's

return to-morrow, when I shall be unwilling to use any spare time but for him, I employ this evening in thanking you for your sermon, which I read with solemn interest, and I wish you had given the one on Malachi to my husband to bring. God grant it may have been profitable to your people for conviction and warning, leading them to consider their ways and the essence of parental sin, in bearing false witness for God, whose name they bear inscribed on them. There was in your sermon a strong confirmation of many of my convictions lately as to the importance of *being*, instead of *saying*, in respect to children. I may show you what I mean from my E——'s words: 'You clap me, mamma, and I'll clap the cat.' Then speaking of the butcher, who he knew had come to kill a pig, 'If he kills that pig, I'll soon learn to kill him, I certainly will'; not perhaps knowing much what killing means, but, just like the chameleon, assuming the moral colouring of what is presented to him."

A little note written also in January, 1843, refers touchingly to the past:—

"Dear ——, it is true indeed that we have not *now* those who, according to their age, were each such helps to us; but we know not what helps they may minister unseen by mortal's eye. That love that so often said, 'When I am older can I do more for you? for it joys my very heart to save you trouble,'—that love dies not, though the eyes from which it beamed are closed in death; and if one member of the body may be employed as the angel was who communicated the Revelation to John, who shall limit the ministry of any of the departed? and who shall even conceive that near and intimate intercourse comprehended in the 'communion of saints'? I have thoughts on this subject that

I would not write, because it is one that may easily be misunderstood, but they are full of strength and sweetness and peace."

In August, 1843, the baby was very ill; she writes of him:—

"He has in one sense been the son of my sorrow; but what a son of consolation also can only be known to those who have loved and sorrowed as I have done. He is meek and placid as a lamb, and when able there is the returning of that light of joy from his heart undimmed by departure from God. Dear, dear child! though it be so hard to lay our joys aside, it is not his mother who would keep him to share our bondage and groaning for deliverance if God sees meet to take him in his infantine beauty, and stamp him for immortality. I need not say, Pray for us, nor assure you that, amid our own watchings and hopes and fears, we are full of interest in what concerns you."

And again:—

"Never was my boy more truly majestic, in the days of his strength and glee, than he is in weakness and weariness now. He seems to look with calm dignity from within the embrace of the everlasting arms; and in his meek, soft eyes there is a power to still the soul into silence in the presence of God, and soothe it into repose on the same bosom in which my patient lamb is carried."

The child was mercifully restored.

In 1844 she writes of her elder boy:—

"Without attempting to detail in order the various points of interest, I must mention dear E——'s birthday last Tuesday, the *first fifth* birthday we have ever kept, and therefore it was a day of solemn interest. At his own request I took him to Mr. ——, 'that he might

speak to God for him, and bless him ;' and when he was telling Mr. —— the various requests he wished to be made, one was, 'Ask God for sissy, to bring her back.'"

In the same year she writes from Edinburgh to her friend Dr. Paisley:—

"9, ALBANY STREET, *July*, 1844.

"My dear Friend,—It will not relieve your peculiar and painful trial to say I feel most deeply for you under it. Indeed, what can comfort you but that which has comforted many, when the objects of their desire were wrenched from them or put far away. 'If God spared not His only begotten and well beloved Son, how shall He not, with Him, freely give us all things?'—all that shall minister to the end for which He gave that all-comprehending gift. The *times* are in His hands, and the *waiting* for His time is the thing by which He proves whether we prefer *His* WILL above *our* chiefest joy; till we do this we cannot get the purest, truest joy in His gifts. Oh! He does not want to [comfort] the *material* creature He has made, with *abstract* consolations. He will work towards us through flesh, and I earnestly trust He may comfort you soon, and save you from the sickness of heart which deferred hope brings, under which we are all now pining, while the wheels of His chariot tarry. 'Sorrow's sel wears past,' and earthly joy wears past; and the grand secret is to be reaping, out of the changing scene, meat that perisheth not with the using. He that doeth the *will* of God endureth for ever. . . .

"The time for our return to England is not fixed—not that it needs any deliberation, for that we are always delivered from, and so do not make such mountains of molehills as many do, to the confounding all the relative proportions of events. I was told one even-

ing at seven, on the day we arrived in London, that we were going to Sweden next day, and next day we started at twelve o'clock. It was fixed on a Wednesday, as I lay in bed ill in Rio, that I must return to England with my sick baby, and on Friday I and my household sailed from the harbour; and so the last journey will come in haste, when the creative word is spoken, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

"Just fancy *Stewart's misery* if he had been *tacked* to a wife who could only move at donkey speed in mind or body, while he is always at high pressure steam power!! Poor Robert used to say, 'I wish I had a frigate as well built for quick sailing as you,' and one has need to sail quick who passes through rough seas.

"I had many precious thoughts last night on, 'As one whom his mother comforts,' etc. D—— awoke from some teething pain, crying, and the moment he opened his eyes and saw that I had come into the room, such a smile through his tears, and such outstretched arms, showed his grief was past; but his sleep was past too for hours, at least till three in the morning, but his delight was perfect at being in my arms and hearing me sing. He is well and happy to-day. I have some things of deep interest to tell you of dearest E——. He is in great glee at the thought of going to the gardens to-day to see a show of greenhouse plants, and I am going to *comfort* myself as flowers always do. It is rather a grief at these places that such crowds come *to be seen* more than to see, for one would like to be alone with God to enjoy the beautiful works of His hands. . .

"Believe me yours most sincerely,

"MARY KER."

When she was very ill, a few months later, she thus speaks of her boys:—

"The dear boys are well. Their night nursery is next to my room. E——'s care and consideration increase; and even D——, when he hears a noise, says, 'Mind mamma's head,' and always comes in with such a queer wee face, and lays down his cheek on me, saying, 'How been, mamma dear?'"

This illness lasted long. The description of the weakness that followed is very vivid. As ever, she drew some spiritual parallel from her condition:—

"As I am now able to be out of bed, and sit in an easy chair, I look much better to my husband and boys, but my weakness is excessive, and my nights are dreadful. If you can imagine an eagle or an antelope transmigrated into the body of a sloth, you may form some notion of the living grave in which I have been entombed in this mortal flesh, helping me to bow down with profound wonder before the awful mystery of the infinite God being manifest in the limits of such flesh, and to rejoice that, having presented this flesh without spot unto God, it shall be made eternally capable of executing the purposes of that holy will. 'Bring my soul out of prison, and it shall praise Thee,' is Christ's prayer *now* in His body [the Church] from that deep mire whence the waiting eye is looking out, till the change come, the change of the vile body," etc.

In April, 1845, the youngest child, Henry Menzies, was born at Liverpool, and the mother and baby seemed prospering every hour till three weeks later, when the weather suddenly became extremely severe, and Mary Ker suffered from chest affection and cough.

Of her baby she says: "The elder boys are enchanted with their little brother; he is very like ——, the shapely little nose and large, bright eyes."

In June she was removed to the sea-side. Though weak, we see from the following letter that the mind was still active :—

"Dr. —— and Mr. —— both concurred in recommending a change to the sea-shore, and on Wednesday we came here, on the mouth of the Dee. We could get no house at all suitable, and therefore came to the hotel. I have certainly derived benefit from the change and —— is like himself again, as bright as a sunbeam. Some of my nights are better, others nearly sleepless. We have a record of one night on which the king could not sleep (Esther vi.), and mighty deliverances arose through those wakeful hours ; and one must hope that, in the body of Christ, some members may reap rest and peace of body or spirit from the watching unto prayer of those that cannot sleep.

"Did you ever preach from Isaiah xliv. 3, 4? As you preach so often about children, this text would be quite in your way. It has been my subject of thought this morning, and is full of strong consolation both to parents and children. I have read Richter's life since I saw you, a book full of interest. He has written one work, 'Levana,' wholly on education, and many of his thoughts and suggestions on this subject are admirable ; but, alas ! alas ! like so many of theGermans, it is a building without a foundation, a tree without a root. He does not believe in the fall of man or the atonement for sin ; and all their swelling words of vanity, about man working out his own destiny, are just trying to make bricks without straw. What is man's destiny? What is man's dignity? To abide in Christ, to live in Him and by Him. Oh ! how dark and dreary is the brightest intellectual region if Christ is not the Sun, the source, the centre !"

In August she writes to a friend :—

"The doctors think my lungs are affected on the left side, and that it is quite unsafe for me to winter here; so we propose, if the Lord will, that I and the boys should go in a few weeks to Cheltenham, and if that does not suit me, farther on. It is very trying when I am so weak, for my husband *cannot* remain with us, and I need him so much; and he is everything to the elder boys, who are both strong and well. It makes me very sad to look at them, and feel myself unable to do anything for them, for even speaking to them brings on my cough; and sweet E——. comes up so gently, and says, 'Can you look at me now and then, mamma? for I cannot do well without your look and your smile.'"

The letter was put aside and not finished for some months. She resumes it thus:—

"Dear Mrs. ——, This was written in August, and now it is January 16th, 1846. I have passed through a furnace in that time, such as I never endured before. You would hear that my precious baby fell asleep in Jesus three months ago. In November my case was pronounced hopeless, and that I could not live a month. Since then God has arrested the disease, and up to this time it is making *no* progress. . . . My dear boys are perfectly well, never having had even a cold. The weather here has been beautiful, and I get out every day in a chair for two hours. I must not write more; this I do on the sofa. Only let me remind you that our departure daily draws nearer. Many events in Scripture are predicted at certain dates, but there is no date for the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living. *That* may happen any day; for that we watch and wait."

The baby's death occurred at Cheltenham, and Mary Ker and her two boys remained there until she

was called to rejoin her five children in the Father's house.

A letter, written also in January, shows plainly how the physical powers were failing. She writes:—

"During my precious baby's sufferings I felt myself bound to a stake which I could neither escape nor endure, and which was consuming me hourly by its strong and increasing flame. I told God that I was wearied even unto death with the long continued suffering, that my flesh and heart were failing, and that I was fainting in His hand; and He did not frown me from Him, but by bringing my husband, by bringing the last peaceful days of my little lamb, by blessing my eyes with those looks of heavenly joy and repose that can never be described or forgotten, and in a thousand other ways, He said to me, His poor, worn-out, impatient child, 'The journey is too great for thee.' And oh! what a reality there is in such a calm—a rest on the Father's bosom! The enemy is allowed to strike, that men may arise to overcome in the conqueror's might. Then the question comes back, If it be so, why am I thus? The disease being arrested is so far a token for good; but I am still bound hand and foot by suffering—my pulse 120, and, what is to me the sting of the trial, unable to do *any* thing for my boys—not even to speak to them—but a word now and then; and their spirits so crave to be with me, that it is quite heart-rending to me."

To her husband she writes:—

"Your letter this morning was so exquisite, that I must begin at once to thank you for it. Oh! but these things are sweet and reviving to me, for my inmost soul responds to their deep reality and truth. I thank God for giving them to you for me. Don't grudge struggling in the deeps, diver, when you bring up such pearls.

There was a sentence in Caroline Fry, yesterday, that I think you will like in connection with some parts of your letter.

"'"I cannot pray now," said an aged saint to me in a season of great depression and sickness; "I can just say, Jesus!" She knew it was enough, and so did I.'"

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the disease of the lungs made progress. In her last letter to her husband, dated April 7th, 1846, Mary Ker expresses her desire that he may come to her on the following evening; but he was not in time, for before he arrived the thin veil had been drawn aside and the loving and lovely spirit had already passed into the undimmed presence of the God and Saviour whom she had so long adored.

"In that sudden, strange transition,
By what new and finer sense
Shall she grasp the mighty vision,
And receive its influence?
Angels! guard the new immortal
Through the wonder-teeming space
To the everlasting portal,
To the Spirit's resting-place!

"Will she there no fond emotion,
Nought of early love retain?
Or, absorbed in pure devotion,
Will no mortal trace remain?
Can the grave those ties dissever,
With the very heart-strings twined?
Must she part, and part for ever,
With the friend she leaves behind?

"No; the past she still remembers;
Faith and hope, surviving too,
Ever watch those sleeping embers,
Which must rise and live anew:

For the widowed, lonely spirit
[Waits] till she be clothed afresh,
Longs *perfection* to inherit,
And to triumph in the flesh."

A remarkable gathering of Christians of varied shades of opinion met around her open grave, and men of mark, each noted for some distinctive excellence, mourned there "with no common mourning" over "a mother in Israel," with whom they had taken spiritual counsel.

Seldom indeed is it given to a woman who has not attained the age of forty years to show forth such a combination of mature wisdom, large mental power, deep spirituality, and exquisite womanly tenderness.

In 1847, a year after her departure, her husband writes that she was "one who had friends whom she 'loved as her own soul' in nearly every Church and sect wherein God's people are scattered in this cloudy and dark day." And in compiling this imperfect narrative of her holy life, we feel that many of Mary Ker's experiences and thoughts are intended for the edification of members of the Church of Christ everywhere. May she being dead yet speak words of hope and cheer to the weary, the desolate, the mourning members of the "one flock."

"*FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS.*"

MARY CALVERT.

Never, in tourney or in fight,
Did warrior old win name so bright
As thou mayest win and wear,
If, like the valiant ones of old,
Thy faith be high, thy heart be bold
To do as well as dare.

—By the late J. S. B. MONSELL.

"EVEN though busily employed in promoting the well-being of your fellow creatures, you may become cold and formal in your religious exercises, and less devoted to the service of God. From my inmost heart, therefore, I exhort you, my dear friend, to be always fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, living only to and for Him. Thus alone you will be able to overcome difficulties; thus alone will you find comfort and peace. He will protect, guide, and bless you, and your work will prosper, not perhaps in the exact manner which you design, but in the way which He has purposed. . . . There are two things to which I particularly entreat your attention; namely, prayer and the study of the holy Scripture. I find it necessary to have constant recourse to these, in order to keep up habitual communion with God, and to fan the fire of the Christian faith in my own breast."—*Extract from a letter addressed to Oberlin by the venerable Stuber. From "The Life of Jean Frédéric Oberlin," by Mrs. Josephine Butler.*

VII.

MARY CALVERT.[1]

BORN 1814. DIED 1882.

MARY FOWLER was born in the village of Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire. Her vigorous youth and womanhood were preceded by a very suffering childhood, in which her power of endurance and natural courage were often manifested. "Don't cry, mother; I will bear it if it will make me better," were words frequently on her lips, when the mother was distressed by having to apply exceptionally painful remedies.

Mary was not enervated by the tenderness which necessarily was largely centred upon her in those early days, while loving hearts were anticipating every need, and loving eyes were watching every sign of suffering and every promise of returning health.

When she grew stronger the child entered into the active pleasures of a bracing country life. She became a fearless rider and "cared little how mettlesome or unruly the steed, if it would only go freely." An accident was to her but an adventure, and in positions of apparent danger no sense of peril seemed to shake her presence of mind. Mary was a match for her brothers in their

[1] This sketch is taken by kind permission from a short but very interesting "Memoir of Mary Calvert," published by T. Woolmer, 2, Castle Street, City Road.

merry out-door pursuits. Sometimes the exuberant spirit within her was ready to chafe against the confines of surroundings, which seemed to ordinary observers full of freedom for the youthful maiden, and she would exclaim: "If I were a man, England should never keep me. I would go abroad."

When only seven years old Mary lost her father. Two years previously the quiet village, comfortably asleep on religious matters, had been aroused by a visit from a Methodist preacher. The mother heard the Gospel message, and received it into her heart, exclaiming: "This is the truth. I feel this is the truth. It is what I have been seeking."

Mrs. Fowler stood firm in the views of Christian truth, which then for the first time came home with power into her life, and she connected herself with the Church whose ministers had first been blessed to her. Her neighbours reproached her, and for a time her husband also opposed; but the peace which had entered her soul became so manifest to all around, that many who began by scoffing ended in marvelling at her happiness, which nothing seemed able to over-cloud. The brightness which now pervaded her, and which was the result of trust in a living Saviour, prepared her to meet the loneliness and the exigences of the new position into which widowhood introduced her. She had plenty to do in the training of her large family, and well qualified she was for the work. She sought to make life attractive to them, and often of an evening she encouraged them to use their musical talents in the home, and having a beautiful voice she united with them in singing hymns and sacred pieces, while they played upon different musical instruments. The evening past and the children gone to their chambers, Mrs. Fowler often spent many

hours in intercessory prayer for those who were now left to her sole earthly guardianship. One prayer she did not cease to offer till it had been answered. This was the request that she might live to see all her children "brought to God and settled in life."

Her youngest child, Mary, was not awakened to the importance of her eternal interests until she was twenty years of age. It was under the preaching of ministers from a distance that she was led to cry earnestly for mercy, and it was not long before "she found peace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." After she had given herself to her God and Saviour, the ardour of her character again showed itself in her whole-hearted devotion to His work. The energy which had been thrown into those athletic pursuits which had braced her physical powers was now employed in untiring labours for the good of others. No obstacles daunted her in her efforts to reach the homes and hearts of those who were in need of spiritual or physical help. It was no desire to merit the praise of men which led her to seek out the most difficult and degraded cases; it was an instinct of hers, born of that great force of character, which could only be satisfied with the heaviest burdens and the hardest tasks.

Mary Fowler now took up every useful service she could find. Zealously she worked to collect funds towards the building of a new chapel in the neighbouring village of Buckland. To this village she walked three times on the sabbath. Her biographer says that "when the road from Aston to Buckland was so bad as to be all but impassable, Mary, on her way to the chapel, used to take the meadow alongside of the road, and then, getting through a hedge, and jumping a somewhat formidable ditch, gain a firm and smoother path at

last. Through all sorts of weather, and disheartened by no difficulties, she made that journey in time to attend the prayer-meeting at eight o'clock, though she knew—as sometimes happened—she might have to 'lead' the meeting herself, in addition to the lighter and more frequent task of setting the tunes for the singing. As soon as the prayer-meeting was done, the Sunday school began; and in this she remained till eleven. Then came the walk home, and back to the public service in the afternoon, and again in the evening. This was her regular Sunday work, and her place at other services during the week was very rarely empty."

In the summer of 1837 one of Mary's brothers brought home a young local preacher who had just offered himself for missionary service and was about to enter a training college. The visit was repeated some months later. In the beginning of 1838 missionaries were called for in Figi, and James Calvert had to prepare to make one of the party. Immediately he returned to Aston Clinton to ask Mary Fowler to become his helper in the large sphere opening up before him. Doubtless Mary's heart was secretly prepared to respond to the proposal, and the consideration of the hardships of such a lot would only be a weight in the same scale. Not so with the mother, who suffered much in consenting to part with her child, though she no doubt realized that Mary was prepared for such a position. The marriage of James Calvert and Mary Fowler took place in March of the same year, and about a month after, the young pair went forth to the scene of their future labours in company with the veteran missionary John Hunt, of holy memory.

While waiting at Sydney for the transit to Figi, the missionaries were much sought after to assist in religious

meetings. One circumstance, in connection with this work, greatly stimulated the faith of James and Mary Calvert. The former had engaged to take an out-door service one sabbath near the Haymarket. Needlessly, so his friends thought, he went to the place long before the appointed time, and although no congregation had as yet collected, Mary Calvert started a hymn. The sound of the singing drew people around them. The preacher gave an address, and Mary handed tracts to those who came. The next day a letter came to them from a gentleman, who said that he had only landed on Saturday, but finding in the evening that forty pounds, his entire resources, had been stolen from his pocket, he was driven to despair. He had for some time led a godless life, and now having no hope nor trust to fall back upon, he resolved to end his life with his own hand, and was on his way to the churchyard to carry out his purpose, when he heard the sweet sound of Mary Calvert's voice. He was attracted to the place, and thinking he might as well attend one more service before performing the fatal deed, he remained during the meeting. As he listened, thoughts of "a Methodist home far away in London, and his mother, a good class-leader, who died when he was a little boy," filled his heart and mind. The tract given him assisted in the decision to begin life anew. When told that the preacher—"he knew not why," had begun the service earlier than the time arranged for, he wept and said, "If you had not, I should have been a dead man."

Mary Calvert's biographer remarks in reference to this incident: "It stands, just at this particular point, as a beautiful picture, exactly foreshowing all that was to follow, without a single break, of the young bride's wedded consecration to her husband's work. In

moments of great need, and at times of great peril, she was never absent from his side; and, tracing back the course of that fellowship now, though it sometimes passes into great gloom and distress, her part all through seems to be set to the cheerful music of unfailing song."

The missionary band reached Figi in December, 1838. The recently married pair settled down at Lakemba, and there they remained during ten years. Mary Calvert's trust and strong powers enabled her to compass mountains of difficulty from which others of feebler faith and force would have been driven back hopeless and utterly disheartened. As we should expect, she immediately plunged into work of various kinds. She was ready for anything that had to be done, and she picked up the language as she went along, very soon being able to meet the women in class. She also taught them new hymn tunes, to their very great delight. She supplemented all her husband's teaching in a most practical manner. The same may be said of her as of another Christian woman under similar circumstances, that she was an "object lesson"; a living exemplification, constantly before the degraded women around her, of true Christian womanhood. Mary Calvert never flinched from intercourse with the natives, rather she cultivated intimate acquaintance with all their affairs, even in their depths of degradation. She tended their sick with her own hands "amidst circumstances which at each step outraged her feelings and shocked every sense." At Lakemba four children brought joy into the mission home, already bright with her unfailing cheerfulness. But no increase of home claims could make her selfish, and we are told that "she made it her study that no pain nor care, no danger nor need of hers should hinder

the mission work." She courageously bore the times of loneliness when her husband went on preaching rounds to distant islands, and he could always rely on her encouragement when the parting moment arrived. During four years she had other service for him, when his health was so seriously affected that had it not been for her constant attention he could hardly have rallied.

In 1848 the family went to reside at Viwa, on another island, 150 miles distant. It was not without a pang that the old home was broken up to enter upon new surroundings. The care of this change of residence rested on Mary Calvert, her husband being fully occupied at the time nursing through his last illness John Hunt, one of the fathers of the mission, who was dying. At Viwa they were near the capital, and they had many callers from the islands round, to all of whom the hostess gave a gracious welcome; indeed, her hospitality became a household word in Figi. To the wives of other missionaries scattered about on the islands her help was invaluable. When they needed her she would go to them, however great the distance, often having to carry her baby with her.

While at Viwa a heavy sorrow fell upon the Calverts. Their beloved Mary, a girl of ten, had been placed under the care of the widowed Mrs. Hunt, who was returning with her children to England. A year and a half after their departure, when the parents were looking for letters from their absent darling, the tidings came that she had died on the passage home.

About the year 1850 Mary Calvert's faith and intrepidity were shown forth in a striking manner, while she was all the time unconscious that she was doing anything very extraordinary. We cannot do better than give the narrative in the words of her biographer, who

remarks that "the story will continue to be told, as long as men have in remembrance the way in which the Lord helped His servants to establish Christianity in Figi."

"A great festival to do honour to some important visitors was being held at Bau, and, that everything might be done in the best style, fourteen persons were captured, and brought to be cooked at the feast. When the terrible news reached Viwa, both the missionaries were away on a distant island. Mrs. Lyth and Mrs. Calvert resolved at all hazards to go among the cannibals and try to rescue the victims. As their boat neared Bau, they knew by the sound of the death-drum and the firing of muskets, and then by piercing shrieks, that the work of butchery had begun. Making all haste, they stepped ashore, and accompanied by a *lotu* chief hurried to the king's house, where no women except those belonging to the household were allowed to enter. But heedless of all but their urgent errand, they passed into the forbidden place, and, with an offering in their hands, pleaded before the deaf old man for the women's lives. Staggered at their heroic daring, he gave order that the murders should be stopped. Five of the wretched women were saved."

An English naval officer who visited Figi wrote of this affair:—

"If anything could have increased our admiration of their heroism, it was the unaffected manner in which, when pressed by us to relate the circumstances of their awful visit, they spoke of it as the simple performance of an ordinary duty."

After seventeen years of active service, James and Mary Calvert left Viwa, and early in 1856 settled down at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, with their five children, two of whom had been at a school in New Zealand. It

must not be supposed that their interest in their beloved flock had waned. James Calvert was closely occupied after his return to England in finally revising the Figian translation of the Scriptures, assisted by the rector of St. Mary's, Woodbridge, who was at that time the editorial superintendent of the Bible Society.

At Woodbridge Mary Calvert combined in her household arrangements much of the freedom and simplicity of a missionary home with English comfort and refinement. She had still the elasticity which we have admired in earlier life, with ready sympathies, and hands reaching forth to bear the burdens of others; and even before she had furnished her house she was assisting in work among the sick of the parish.

In this Suffolk home were spent four years of pleasant English life with their children. Then came sad tidings from Figi of "death amongst the missionaries." It was in consequence arranged to send some young men with their wives to fill the vacant places. Mary Calvert took in the situation at a glance. Here were these inexperienced workers going out into a field where death had removed the missionary who should have acted as their father and director. She saw that the work must suffer if they went alone. She realized fully what she would have to give up, and the pain she and her husband would have to endure if they made the decision which she knew every one else would hesitate to make for them. She knew that her husband and herself were needed, and she said, "We must go back to Figi."

The words once said, there was no drawing back, and although "it almost broke her heart" to give up her children, she had no desire to take back their united decision. And when the sacrifice *was* made, and the voyage commenced, she threw herself into the interests

of her young missionary companions with her accustomed spirit. While her husband gave lessons in the Figian language daily to the young men, she did the same for their wives, seeking in many ways to help them with her motherly counsel.

About ten days after the beginning of the voyage the missionaries held a watch-night service, of which Mary Calvert writes: "31*st* [*Dec.*, 1860]. A fine, bright day, and a fair wind. Good-bye to land and ships. We had our watch-night service at English time—one hour and twenty-eight minutes before ship's time; and we felt we were one in spirit with thousands of our beloved friends at home. I trust we all made a fresh surrender of ourselves to God and to His cause. The Lord was with us, and we felt His presence."

Once more settled in Figi, she was, as of old, ready to assist every one. To the younger members of the mission she was a true mother, and they warmly returned the love which she gave them. Still was she always prepared for the canoe voyage to distant islands, if she could serve them. At other times, when she knew that a canoe was likely to start on the morrow, she would sit up for hours writing the latest news to send to those who were settled in these remote districts. Her thoughtfulness for others knew no limit, either in its large bounty or in its care for their minutest needs. The present home was at Levuka, a place which was the centre of the ever-increasing mercantile intercourse between Figi and the rest of the world. English and American consuls resided here. This position greatly enlarged Mary Calvert's circle, and entailed upon her added claims of hospitality, no longer specially confined to missionaries and natives, but embracing "naval officers of different nations, scientific travellers, and other distinguished visitors."

Her care of the sick was unrivalled, and her resources in suggestions for alleviating their sufferings endless. She ministered to white and coloured alike, and her gentle influence captivated all hearts. When it was proposed to establish a hospital in Levuka, the Roman Catholic priest said: "We want such a lady as Mrs. Calvert [for matron]. When she visited my people, she did not ask, 'Are you Catholic?' or 'Are you heathen?' or 'Are you Wesleyan?' but 'Are you sick?' and 'What can I do for you?'"

After remaining some years in Levuka the mission was in such good working order that the Calverts were able to return to England in 1866.

They settled down at Bromley, in Kent. Some of the children were scattered, others were able to return home, and the mother's heart overflowed with joy. Six peaceful years, as full of occupation as ever to both the missionaries, passed only too quickly. Again the nest was stirred, and in 1872 the Calverts were on their way to the African mission field. James Calvert was still strong for service, and their second daughter having gone to Africa for her health, they accepted a position of usefulness at Bloemfontein.

Before they started the tidings came that she had departed to her heavenly home. No longer specially attracted to Bloemfontein, they offered to go to any part where they were most needed, and were called to the South African Diamond Fields. Their youngest daughter was the delightful companion of her parents.

On the way to their new home they visited the grave of their beloved child, and then began to labour afresh for souls. Their residence at two or three different stations was no doubt the means of infusing fresh life into the work, and Mary Calvert carried with her from place

to place the affection of many new friends, to whom she had been of service. After nearly nine years in Africa, the missionaries once more set their faces towards England. The mother's health had long been failing, but the old brightness of spirit was still hers. In September, 1881, they settled into a snug home at Torquay, and there, during her remaining days, she was tenderly cared for by her husband and daughter, "her sweet Lakai." She loved to call her child by her Figian pet name, and to recall the memories of earlier days in her first mission home, which was so happy, though so full of toil and difficulties.

During the past Mary Calvert's faith had been manifested largely by her life, and she had cared little to speak or write of herself and her doings. Her words now, in intimate converse with her daughter, showed that the same faith upheld her in suffering and the prospect of death:—

"It is all peace within. I just leave myself entirely in my heavenly Father's hands, and have no anxiety about the future. I know that if He sees fit to send me greater suffering, He will give greater grace to bear it."

To complete the happiness of her last days their youngest son returned from Africa in time to assist in ministering to his mother as she passed through the valley of death. It was a lighted valley to her, and with the unselfishness which clung to her to the last, she cheered all around. On January 4th, 1882, the earthly work being completed, this faithful servant entered upon her everlasting home, to go no more out.

SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

ANNA BACKHOUSE.

Hers was the cultured and the lucid mind,
The generous heart, the conduct ever kind,
The temper sensitive, yet always mild,
The frank simplicity of nature's child—
Nature unspoiled by fashion or by pride,
And yet subdued by grace and sanctified.

J. J. G.

"I AM not unmindful of the wide difference between the appreciation of a pure and true life and the living of it, and am willing to own, that in delineating a character of such moral and spiritual symmetry I have felt something like rebuke from my own words. I have been awed and solemnized by the presence of a serene and beautiful spirit, redeemed from all selfishness, and I have been made thankful for the ability to recognise and the disposition to ove him."—*Introduction to "John Woolman's Journal," by J. G. Whittier.*

VIII.

ANNA BACKHOUSE.[1]

BORN 1820. DIED 1848.

ANNA, the only daughter of Joseph John and Jane Gurney, was born at Earlham, near Norwich, on December 21st, 1820.

This home in which she first saw the light had also been her father's birthplace. Joseph John Gurney and his ten brothers and sisters had been brought up in it, and from light-hearted childhood and youth had passed into earnest manhood and womanhood there. The brothers had now entered upon homes of their own. Four of the seven sisters had crossed the threshold as brides. Elizabeth Fry, so widely known as the friend of the sinful and degraded; Richenda, as the wife and helper of Francis Cunningham, the devoted vicar of Lowestoft; Hannah, who became the wife of the noble philanthropist Fowell [afterwards Sir Fowell] Buxton; and Louisa, wife of Samuel Hoare, the wise mother and the writer of valuable thoughts on the training of the young.

Three sisters, highly intellectual and devoted to their Lord, each in her own distinct path, remained unmarried.

[1] This sketch is mainly compiled from the unpublished memoir of Anna Backhouse, by kind permission.

Catharine, the thoughtful eldest daughter, who at the early age of seventeen efficiently guided her father's large household, bereaved by the death of the mother; Rachel, with her warm affections, the tender, loving, faithful sister, and friend. Priscilla, lovely in person and mind and deeply spiritual, and a gifted minister of the Society of Friends.

When their brother Joseph John Gurney married, and became the head of the house, these three remained in the old family home, having their own apartments, and at the same time sharing in the interests beneath that hospitable roof, where open house was kept, not only for the members of the family and all their belongings, but for a wide circle of men and women of different names among men, who were united in the determination to serve their common Lord. And besides all the intellectual and spiritual advantages, this home at Earlham and its surroundings were very lovely, and may have contributed their effect in developing a character of no common delicacy and refinement.

In 1822, when little Anna was only eighteen months old, her mother was taken from her. The bereaved husband felt the stroke with all the intensity of his keen feelings, yet he could acknowledge that at times all the storms had been "hushed by that Divine power of which he had experienced the healing virtue."

The little one was too young to feel any sense of bereavement, and her father and aunts sought to make life as pleasant as possible for this treasured child and her only brother, who was fifteen months her senior.

Five years later Joseph John Gurney married Mary Fowler, and to this dear second mother Anna soon learned to give a child's warm affection, receiving in return motherly love and wise and gentle training.

Anna's remembrances of her childhood are very pleasant. We give an interesting passage, which contains in addition to descriptions of her own child life, a delightful picture of the father whom she loved and reverenced with an intense fulness of daughterly affection. Joseph John Gurney was worthy of the love and obedience she delighted to give him. In all the relations of life, his innate nobleness of soul, sanctified by Divine grace, was abundantly shown forth. He glorified his God, not only as a devoted Christian minister and religious writer and philanthropist, but also in business affairs, as a banker and as a citizen; his position as a member of the Society of Friends making it less difficult to combine all these callings.

Anna writes [1]:—

"The earliest impression which I can distinctly recall of my dearest father was in the east room, at Earlham, which he used as his own after my mother's death. As very little children, we were in the habit of being with him while he dressed in a morning, and I well remember that he kindly allowed me to use, as my playthings, the things he kept in his pockets. His countenance and figure are so impressed on my mind as they appeared in later years, that I cannot call up a distinct image of him as he must have been then. Yet surely I *do* remember him with his brown hair, his high colour, and his beaming countenance. At the time I am speaking of (three years after my mother's death) I think his face wore a grave, yet always peaceful expression; and he was ready at all times for a good

[1] See "Recollections of Joseph John Gurney," by his daughter, extracted from "Memoirs of J. J. Gurney," edited by Joseph Bevan Braithwaite.

game of play with us. But he was leading a very busy life, and we were consequently very little with him. Another picture that I have of him in my mind is when standing in the garden near the hall door, delighting in the flowers, as he always did, and watching my brother and me, who were playing about him. . . . On our part we were excessively fond of our father—at the same time *his word was law;* it never entered our minds, I believe, openly to disobey him; and I am reported to have been in the habit of informing visitors, that 'papa required implicit obedience.' We were very little children when he began occasionally to take us into his study for times of religious retirement and prayer. After sitting a short time in silence, he would often kneel down, and pour forth his prayers in the most simple words he could use. . . . We continued this practice, at times, till he went to America, and I well remember, when he gave us some parting religious advice at that time, that he spoke with comfort of these seasons of retirement, and said that he hoped he had in some measure fulfilled his paternal duty, in endeavouring to train us in the habit of prayer. It was a subject he constantly pressed on our attention, begging us to be most regular in reading the Scriptures to ourselves in private, morning and evening, and in endeavouring to wait upon the Lord. Having mentioned this subject, I think I must not omit another which he also very frequently pressed on our attention, so that they are connected in my mind as those on which he spoke to us the most often and the most earnestly. This was the immediate and perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit, a doctrine which he endeavoured to explain to us, and the practical application of which he tried to make us feel, even at a very early age;—'the golden clue,' as he

called it, a clue by which he was himself led, both in small things and great, more than any other person that I ever knew. As we grew up, and as our intimacy with him deepened, we saw in himself, I think I may say, a striking exemplification of his own views.

"But I must return to our childhood. As soon as we could read, it was our daily office to read a psalm to him in the early morning. Deeply serious and attentive was his countenance at these times. When once this habit was begun, he could not bear us to spend the time in any other way, never allowing us to talk to him, but making us read until he was quite dressed. I do not think that at that very early period we had any other Bible reading with him than this (except, of course, the regular family reading). Religious instruction, however, we had much from him in the way of conversation. Often while we were taking a ramble in the park he would endeavour to impress upon us the great doctrines of Christianity, and especially the principles of Friends. . . . But while he thus endeavoured to cultivate a taste for our own peculiar path, he was always ready to acknowledge the good in those who did not, in everything, agree with him, and freely allowed us to associate with the great variety of guests who, at this time, frequented Earlham. Strong indeed is my impression of the warm welcome he gave to all 'the excellent of the earth,' of whatever sect or position in life. He delighted in the society of such; and when religion was united with fine intellectual powers, their company was quite a feast to him. He always acted on the principle of 'learning something from every one,' and early advised us to do the same. . . . He used to say the quarterly meeting suppers put him in mind of the 'lovefeasts' of the early

Christians. He certainly trained us to treat travelling ministering Friends with the greatest respect, I was going to say reverence; and their coming to Earlham was always a pleasure to us all. There is no one who was more cordially welcomed by him, in these early days, than Jonathan Hutchinson. He was a *picturesque* person, his white hair hanging almost to his shoulders, his countenance full of dignity and peace. I well remember my dear father's affectionate attention to him. He used to say 'he was a thorough Christian gentleman, refined by nature and by grace.' I was about seven years old when our father left us for a long journey in Ireland, a circumstance which I mention chiefly for the sake of recording our intense joy at his return. I shall never forget the feeling of receiving him at our Brighton lodgings, where we had been staying with my aunt Rachel Gurney, who was there for the benefit of her health. How I did jump when I saw him, screaming out, 'It is papa! it is papa!' without the least power of running to meet him! And I have vividly before me his countenance at that moment, showing a perfect counterpart of our joy! We returned home soon after this, and the next event of importance was his bringing our new 'mamma' to Earlham. It was one of our lovely Norfolk evenings, in early autumn, when they arrived. We children were waiting for them in anxious expectation, when the carriage drove up. I was awed at being introduced to my new mamma, for I had never seen her before, but was directly at ease with her; and I can fancy that I caught his evident happiness."

The next eight years were very bright years to Anna. Her father was happy with the wife who was his companion in so many of his pursuits, from the daily Greek readings before he went off to the bank to the

summer evening rambles in the park and meadows. She was also the sympathizer in all his religious work, not hindering him from those frequent missionary journeys which he felt called by his Lord to undertake. The children were early "transferred from the nursery" to be the companions of their parents at the five o'clock dinner, which Anna says was a great advantage to them. Their father took deep interest in their studies, and a few words of approval from him were a great stimulus, while his own example of untiring industry had a good effect upon them.

He suffered bitterly if he saw his children doing wrong, and Anna had a vivid remembrance of once seeing her father weep, when he thought she had been persevering in a falsehood, of which she was in reality quite innocent. She says it was a far greater punishment than could have been inflicted in any other way, and at the same time increased her love and reverence for him.

The atmosphere of the home in which Anna's character developed is best described in her own words. No Christian home is fully sanctified till the natural tendency too hastily to criticise and judge others is brought into subjection to that law of love which "thinketh no evil." Were the Church of Christ delivered from this fruitful source of obstruction to the growth of the fruits of the Spirit, she would stand forth far more nobly and attractively before the world. Anna writes:—

"Truly did he teach us by example, as well as precept, when he utterly discouraged all criticism on other persons; he could not bear the least approach to satire, and never allowed us to condemn anybody. If a remark, tending to disparage another, was made, he always apologized for them; and when he could not do this

with truth, he never would allow us as children to take upon us the office of judge. This was the case with all; but when it came to serious people, to ministers, he was, if possible, still stronger on the subject, discouraging every remark on their peculiar manner or address, and only urging us to learn all we could from such. I should think there was seldom a house where there was so little gossip about *persons;* for his own loving spirit and elevated tone of mind had a powerful influence, not only on those about him, but on passing guests and visitors. Another thing against which he was most careful to guard us was the slightest disrespect, or even familiarity, in our manner of speaking on serious subjects. Some of the young people with whom we associated were in the habit of quoting texts of Scripture on common occasions, not in ridicule, but in a careless way: this he never allowed; and he so impressed upon us the impropriety of thus disregarding the difference between the Scriptures and other books, that I cannot now hear such a thing done without real pain. I think he was remarkable for bringing religion to bear on every event in life, and letting us *see* that he did so; while, at the same time, he never weakened the feeling of reverence due to the subject. He was much in the habit of referring to religious matters in his conversation with us, and I think encouraged an ease in us in speaking of them; yet this never descended into too familiar a way of bringing them in. . . . . I think he had a peculiar sympathy with children, and there was something almost indescribable in his gentleness towards us, even while reproving us. When I was sitting by him one day at dinner, a remark was made which he saw pained me, and I remember how concerned he looked, and how he tried, by little attentions, to make me feel that what was

said was rather too severe. How does kindness, when a child's feelings are wounded, remain in the memory!"

Anna's description of the Bible Meeting gatherings, which were quite an institution at Norwich, is charming. She says:—

"One of the most marked events in each year was the Bible Meeting party; perhaps these occasions were particularly likely to be great epochs to a child. At all events they were so to me. From the time that my dearest father put me, as a little child, on the table at dessert, to look at a party of ninety, the largest we ever had, till they were discontinued, I looked forward to them as a great treat. But they were, for better reasons, occasions of extreme interest, and I have no doubt were the means of great good, in uniting many in Christian fellowship who would otherwise have known each other only by name. . . . [My father] certainly had a remarkable power of showing love and friendship towards his fellow Christians, whilst he always openly acknowledged and maintained his own opinions on particular points. A more complete illustration of this part of his character there could not be than in his management of the very large parties at Earlham of which I am speaking. His brothers-in-law (my uncles Buxton and Cunningham), who were his ready helpers on such occasions, asked whom they liked to the meetings; and certainly the dining-room, filled on those days, was no common sight. It was so different from a party called together for mere amusement, so fine a feeling pervaded the whole; while he, as master, was wonderfully able to keep up the tone of conversation, so that I should think it never sank to a mere chit-chat level. My impression is, that while he greatly felt the responsibility of these occasions, he most truly enjoyed them, having often around him

those whose conversation was a feast to him; such as, Wilberforce, Simeon, Legh Richmond, John Cunningham, and many others.

"I never saw my dear father look more beautiful than he did at the bottom of those long tables. As soon as the cloth was removed, he would extract their various stores of information from different individuals in the most happy manner. Thus the time was turned to account, and I have no doubt these days were often very profitable to many, as it was his most earnest desire they should be. His own loving spirit was caught by all around, and I must believe it was in great measure owing to the depth of his charity that there was such remarkable unity among those whom he assembled around him. . . . I have before said how careful he was to be attentive to guests of every degree, and these occasions would furnish abundant proof that he was peculiarly kind to those who might feel themselves a little less grand than their neighbours. His own ministry at the family [Bible] readings was very striking and impressive. There was often a religious [meeting] in the course of the evening, beside the usual readings, and these were generally very solemn occasions."

In 1835, after an expedition in Wales, during which parents and children enjoyed the delightful scenes together, Anna was taken ill of fever. The mother nursed her devotedly, and then succumbed to the same disease. During thirty hours before her departure she was unconscious, and then for a few moments the mind awoke, her face was illuminated with holy joy, and though she could not speak her bright looks of recognition were an unspeakable comfort to her stricken husband and daughter.

Anna was comforted by her father's words, so tenderly

and thoughtfully spoken to her, "I think thou art remarkably fitted, dear, to minister to my wants." And though scarcely fifteen, this daughter, with her true womanly tact and Christian feeling, set herself to the pleasant task of comforting and helping her father, and proved herself fitted to her position. She writes of this time:—

"I believe I did all that I could, for I felt from that time a new tie to him, and all my powers, such as they were, were devoted to him. It was beautiful to observe how willing he was to accept help and sympathy. He threw himself freely on us in his distress, and he was most willing to be soothed and comforted by each in their turn. This openness to sympathy made it most easy to be with him in his deep sorrow. Many of the hours we passed together I shall never forget. He was in deep suffering at times; whilst at others, light seemed to break through all the clouds, and he looked beautifully calm and elevated in his affliction.

"About this time, too, we began to read the Greek Testament regularly after breakfast; our Aunt Rachel Fowler, who was still with us, and a great comfort to us all, my father, J—— H——, and I. . . . It was a high privilege to read with one who had so deeply studied the Greek Testament, and to enjoy his fine views of Scripture truths, while his accurate knowledge of the force of the original language enabled him to give us many most interesting explanations. He was very patient with our blunderings, though it always annoyed him a little, and he tried to stir us up to be as correct as himself. I should think few, even professed theological students, had studied the Greek Testament more thoroughly than he had done. None, at all events, could more enjoy the daily reading of it.

"During the year 1836 my father and I went several little journeys together. At that time we travelled by coach, and I mention them partly for the sake of saying how he kept to his rule of never 'missing an opportunity.' He almost always managed to read the Scriptures to our fellow passengers, and often led the way to profitable conversation. I don't think he ever went in these public conveyances without attempting to profit them, and he generally found willing and attentive hearers. How often have I had occasion to remark, in going about with him, what a great advantage his graceful, winning manners were to him, even in the promotion of the cause which was dearest to his heart!"

In 1837 Anna was called upon to show her love to her Lord by willingly giving up her father for a long missionary journey, the prospect of which had developed in his mind during the previous autumn.

Depending on the Holy Spirit's guidance, this devoted minister was always ready to follow when some new mission was opened up to him, as the path in which he was called to help others. His heart was now drawn out in the love of the Gospel towards the meetings of the Society of Friends in the United States. After laying before the Church this large prospect and receiving the concurrence of his friends and their credentials, J. J. Gurney made preparation for his departure, and then started for his embarkation at Liverpool. Anna writes of those last days :—

"My father was remarkably preserved in peace and quietness, and completed all the arrangements he wished to make for the management of his household during his absence. I was glad to be allowed to go with him to Liverpool, with my Uncle and Aunt Gurney and my

Aunt Fry. It was rather curious that we were not many yards out of the park gate before we were nearly overturned by one of the horses kicking. We had to get hastily out of the carriage, but I shall never forget the elevated serenity of his look as he smiled and said, 'The first of my dangers!' We had a remarkably interesting occasion before we got to Liverpool, in which he poured out his prayers for Aunt Fry in a way which was a great comfort to her; for she deeply felt his going, and had at the time much upon her. The parting day came. I was far too much overwhelmed to have a distinct recollection of it, but I know there was a very solemn feeling over all, and that he was much helped through every pain."

Anna used to say afterwards that she believed she "scarcely lost the sense of their separation for a moment during the long three years of her father's absence."

During this time of loneliness Anna was growing spiritually, though she hardly realized it herself, and often felt she was falling very far short of the high standard she desired to keep in view. To assist her recollection she wrote out a list of those things which she felt incumbent upon her. She begins with the service directly due to her heavenly Father:—

"1st. A constant watchfulness. . . .

"2nd. A constant prayerfulness.

"3rd. Regular reading and prayer, twice a day at least.

"4th. Keeping *His* glory, not my own vain ambition in view, in everything I do, in societies, etc.

"5th. *Worship* at meeting." . . .

Then she goes on to give her view of what is due and fitting from her to each of the little home circle—to her brother, her Aunt Catharine, and her Aunt Rachel Fowler, mentioning those points in which she feared she might

fail in being to each individually what she desired to be.

"Lastly, *to visitors.*

"1st. A general kindness.

"2nd. No selfishness.

"3rd. To do my best to use a right influence.

"4th. To get all the good I can from their example."

About the same time she says in her diary:—

"*5th mo., 17th.*—Strange to say, I find that duties to my God are harder to be performed than duties to my fellow creatures. May I have grace this week to serve Him, and do my duty to them also! Suppose it all done, I am but an unprofitable servant. I know it will not be, for I am very wicked. Where can I go for help, but to Jesus Christ? O Lord! cleanse me by Thy Spirit from the *guilt* and *power* of sin; make me *very* humble.

In November, 1839, she writes of her longing to get rid of "vanity, pride, and selfishness," and she purposes to write down daily for a week her failures, she begins thus:

"*1st day* . . . In the morning meeting was more full of nonsensical fancies of greatness for myself than of worship. . . . Afternoon, spoke highly to ——, because I did not want the trouble of noticing her. I did not esteem her better than myself then."

The next day she writes:

"Vain of having done well at Babur School; never answered aunt when she said the tea was weak. Cross at German. . . . Pride destroys all, even affection. O that the lofty things may indeed be brought low!"

In prospect of his return, Anna wrote to her father a long letter, in which she lay bare before him her whole heart. It was a thoughtful act characteristic of her and

a delightful preparation for their meeting after three years' absence from one another.

The home coming of the traveller on August 20th, 1840, is graphically described by the overjoyed child. Rushing to the front door at the sound of the carriage wheels she tells us :—

"He clambered down into my arms, and our first *long* kiss was much too overpowering for me to be able to describe the sensation! While he greeted all the others, I had time a little to get my breath, and we adjourned into the dining-room to tea. Aunt Fry, Uncle and Aunt Buxton, and J—— H—— came with him. He was perfectly calm, easy, and natural; enjoying his meal; talking little, but completely happy and peaceful."

Anna adds :—

"The *peace* felt then, and all the next day, was to *me* like *that* which was given us when we went away to Liverpool—*then* in the midst of great sorrow, now in the midst of great joy, but the same peace!"

The next day at the family Bible reading, when the household to the number of thirty were assembled, it was a time of joyful and solemn worship and thanksgiving. Anna says :—

"Papa shook hands with [the servants] he had not seen, and then, sitting down, read the 14th of John. I cannot the least describe the feeling of hearing his voice again in reading and in his lovely little comment afterwards on, 'Because I live, *ye* shall live also.' The preservation of himself and those nearest to him; their *life* given to them temporally and spiritually, a proof of a *living Saviour.* I can remember very little of the words. 'I am permitted to return home,' he said, 'with unalloyed peace, but without excitement. After a journey of more than twenty thousand miles; after a variety of

perils by land and sea; after many difficulties, in which my temporal life has been given me for a prey; and I hope I may say *deepened* in my *spiritual* life,—I am permitted to find those nearest and dearest to me alive naturally, and also alive spiritually. What a proof it s of a *living* Saviour!' He then expressed how often he had experienced this truth in his long and varied pilgrimage, its power to help and to sustain and to comfort; and finished by repeating, with the strongest emphasis, the words of Job: 'Oh that my words were written! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I *know* that my Redeemer *liveth*.' Aunt Fry returned thanks and offered prayer in her own beautiful way."

At the meeting next day the admiring daughter writes, after describing the greetings from the Friends and the congratulations she received:—

"It was deeply interesting to see him walk up the meeting and take his own seat; truly, thankfulness and solemnity were given in no common degree, as we settled in silence. It was first broken by dear old Frances Page kneeling down, and giving thanks for his return most sweetly, and made more interesting by our never having expected to see her at meeting again, six months ago. Soon after, papa rose. He thought he might employ the words of the psalmist, 'Thou hast put gladness into our hearts,' etc.; that it was given him to feel unsullied peace, and what might be compared with the cloudless sky. He went on to the *foundation* of true quiet of mind; the principal ingredient of happiness; what happiness is lasting; his experience of the faithfulness of his great Master during his long journey; of the efficacy of the Scriptures; of the Holy Spirit as the *Applier;* of the foundation of a Christian's

hope; ending with a strong appeal to attend to the guidance of the Spirit. I can only give this slight sketch; but his standing in his old place proclaiming his views of religion, with his testimony to them from fresh experience, was more striking to me than I can express."

Then follows a description of a delightful family gathering:—

"After meeting, *en masse* the family walked off. A fine party assembled at dinner—Aunt Fry, Uncle and Aunt Buxton, the Forsters, John and Bessie, and our home party. There was no great talking, but all happiness. The interest of *looking* at everybody was enough. As soon as the cloth was removed, papa knelt down and returned thanks beautifully for his return to his dear, peaceful home, adorned in such beauty; and prayed earnestly that self might be held in no reputation, but that all praise and honour might be given where alone they were due. Aunt Fry added a few sweet words: a hope that increased dedication might show forth thankfulness."

Times of intimate intercourse with her father were sometimes Anna's privilege, even in the midst of multifarious outside interests, and he found her, as ever, strong to sympathise, and so glad to have him "throwing a great deal into her hands." Together they entered into the joys and sorrows incident to such an extended family circle. Anna was warmly loved and welcomed everywhere, and frequently some of her intimate female friends, especially her cousins, were her delightful visitors. She was fond of riding, and often made pleasant excursions with them or in company with her father.

She writes in her journal:—

"10*th month*, 1840, 6*th day*.—Long ride with papa to

Ketteringham; a great deal of conversation with him; most easy and open. American letters, his book, etc. I hope I am thankful for such a privilege, and for being made at all able to meet his mind, which I *am* to a certain extent."

On another occasion she writes:—

"*Halesworth, 2nd day.*—A settled, industrious morning with Chenda Gurney, she reading Chalmers, German, Smythe, while I drew. A ride with her and papa. . . . Then on with Chenda to the Babur school; examined the children on the miracles, on which they answered truly well, to my great satisfaction. I set them to work on their next subject, and scampered home. Some rather nice talk with Chenda on the road."

The following extract, referring to a family essay meeting may find a place here:—

"I went to Cromer with Caroline Hoare and Juliana Barclay, who with Gurney Hoare lodged here the night before. Cliff House was too full to receive us, so I lodged with Elizabeth Wilkinson. This gave rise to my production for the essay meeting; *viz.*, 'Settling at Chadwick's lodgings.' I wrote it very much to take off the idea of my being the author of another far too grave to make it agreeable to own it. It was on 'Clumsy Workmen Complain of their Tools,' which had been good practice for me, and rather a useful subject for thought. The great essay meeting was on sixth day evening. We mustered when we met at Northrepp's a very strong party—Buxtons, Hoares, and Frys, with Herbert Johnson and sisters—about forty. We had a most amusing evening, and I thought that the collection showed really some talent, taken as a whole. The conclusion was at the Hoares' the next evening, for which I stayed, which was

more than I intended to have done. However, I was very glad of the opportunity of being with the Hoares, whom I so seldom see. It answered well for me, and I greatly feel the importance of keeping up family connections while we can."

In the autumn of 1840 Anna was formally installed as mistress of the household. She writes of her deep sense of her responsibility:—

"This morning settling accounts with Aunt Rachel Fowler, and taking them with a most earnest wish that I may keep them as well as she has done, and all sorts of wishes about my mistresship. I can't put them down; but I do so hope to *do right* in it and *not wrong*, and to please the dear people, and to take the proper line with the maids, etc. I have no doubt that I feel the weight much more in prospect than I shall when it comes to reality; and I shall be glad now to be fairly embarked in it."

Anna remained still dissatisfied with herself, and complains of her love of praise, which she says would do her more harm if her mind did not contradict it.

Early in 1841, while staying with their cousin, Hannah Chapman Backhouse, at Darlington, she writes in her journal:—

"*1st month, 19th*, 1841.—This day has been marked to me by a very interesting conversation with papa, alluding to possibilities of the greatest interest to us, and in the thought of which, after some little tossing, I feel very peaceful."

The possibility thus hinted at was the prospect of her father's marriage with Eliza Paul Kirkbride, a lady of the Society of Friends, who had come from Philadelphia on a long visit to her intimate friend H. C. Backhouse, whose companion she had been in missionary service

in America. We mention this approaching event more particularly, because Anna's attitude towards it does strikingly bring out her right feeling, not only as a Christian, but as a woman.

To put herself aside that she may cause no uncomfortableness in the atmosphere around those whom she loves, ought to be accepted as the privilege of every true woman, yet how many of us fall short of this self-forgetfulness which is the prerogative of our sex?

Anna had her "tossings" in the thought of giving up her place as the *confidante* of her father and his adviser in all his nearest interests; but we do not believe that she let him see any shadow cross her fair brow in view of the prospect before her. She writes:—

"*5th mo.*, *18th*, 1841.—Oh, how earnestly do I desire that I may *deeply* learn the lesson which, with all its happy parts, this change in our circumstances does, and ought to teach me, of my being so *nothing;* that, though still I may have the closest tie with dearest papa and with *her*, too, in addition, yet as I can no longer be *the* one as I have had the privilege to be to *him*, that it may increase my dependence on *that* Father, with whom communion is only interrupted by our own sinfulness! I know that the gain of such a friend and the taking off by her of burden will be a wonderful advantage to me, and doubt not I shall estimate it more and more. But there are pains, though always decreasing, which it is right and natural to feel; and may it all prove, as it ought to do, a teaching lesson! Oh! may I *so* love that it may work for good; and may the spirit of thankfulness be given me for the mercies bestowed, for the happiness granted to dearest papa! How interesting is the thought of his losses, his services, his recompenses! He is so sweet and trustful."

During the yearly meeting of the Society of Friends in May Anna had some "comforting" intercourse with E. P. Kirkbride, and says in her own sweet way that she feels that "*peace* is stamped" on the approaching union.

On summing up her impressions with regard to the meetings, after remarking that rather too much time was given to the smaller details of the practices of Friends, she says that the meetings were often "so solemn," and the general tone seemed to her "so richly evangelical," the "standard set up" "so high," that her attachment to the society of which she was a member was very much confirmed. She adds: "It is a great satisfaction to me to find the cogitations I have had over it by myself and with the Bible during the last three years, so clench in with the reality of the thing as exemplified in these meetings. What an amazing privilege to be satisfied with the religious society you belong to, to feel that the causes for dissatisfaction were in yourself alone or in those cases where the true principle is not legitimately carried out!"

Next followed a short visit to Paris with her father and aunt and others in the interests of the anti-slavery cause. It was a time of great enjoyment to Anna, who thus records some of the most interesting incidents of their visit:—

"Second day evening was, perhaps, the most entertaining of all, as we had the real interest of dining with Guizot at the close of an afternoon in the Chamber of Peers. I had read so many of his books, and with such delight, that I heartily enjoyed it, though I was far too frightened at him (I believe merely at his intellectual greatness) to talk to him; but the others did, and he was very agreeable. His old mother

delighted me; we had a sweet conversation with her before dinner on Aunt Fry, etc. The evening passed off very pleasantly. On fourth day evening we gave our anti-slavery *soirée*, and we are thankful to have it so well over. One hundred and twenty came, who were well seated in three of our rooms thrown into one. Josiah Forster spoke nicely and introduced papa, who made a capital speech in French to his *own* and I am sure to my admiration; he was almost eloquent. A few impressive sentences from Uncle Gurney in English, and then one of the Delesseres returned thanks on behalf of the company. The attention was extreme, and there was evidently a strong impression made."

On October 21st, 1841, Joseph John Gurney was married to Eliza Kirkbride. He thus describes the return home in his journal:—

"10*th mo.*, 28*th.*—Reached Earlham in health and great peace at nine o'clock in the evening; the place comfortable and homeish; the reception from my dearest children glowing. Oh may we be kept perpetually in the hollow of the Lord's holy hand!"

The love and welcome given by Anna to her stepmother met their own reward. In time the two became closely united, and Anna did not feel that she had lost any of the parental love she prized so highly. Six months later, after saying that she had not had much inclination to make a record, "having been afraid, during a part of it, of being too intimate with herself," she writes:—

"But it is now quite different; we are perfectly settled, each in our own nook, and have every reason to be thankful and happy. My mother is of course now quite established, and, I think, really feels increasingly happy in her position. She has done everything with

great tact and judgment. All of our relations are extremely fond of her. . . . Papa is supplied to his utmost wishes, and I need not, therefore, add that I am most comfortable."

Anna's fear "of being too intimate with herself" shows her delicate sense of the need a Christian often has for reticence from talking or writing or even thinking much about a subject which has in it elements capable of producing murmurings and those varied evil fruits which are generated by the spirit of discontent.

In the autumn, her father being in ill health, they went to Cromer and Hunstanton. Anna writes of these visits in her journal :—

"*7th mo.*, *24th*, 1842. We have had a pleasant week of occupation. Jane Backhouse,[1] Chenda, and I read Greek with Cousin Anna; ride, bathe, and companionize; which, added to a great deal of sketching with K. Fry, have kept me thoroughly employed."

And a few days later: "I am now sitting by ——. We are both journalizing, and she has been reading me some of hers. It shows her own clear and beautifully regulated mind; its depth of seriousness and its power of intellect and its richness of sentiment are quite uncommon and most feeding to me. . . . J—— H—— came on fifth day morning, and went away early this morning. He brought sunshine with him, as usual, and I am afraid took it away too; for we have been all rather dull since he left us.

"3rd day afternoon we all spent sketching on the Runton Hills."

And two or three weeks later she writes :—

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[1] Afterwards the wife of Barclay Fox, of Falmouth.

"I cannot describe the feelings with which I approached this place [Hunstanton], or those with which I stood looking out of my window upstairs upon the village and sea. The place is so intimately connected with my own mother; and here it is I see and can trace the places where she used to go; but I cannot form even a definable conception of that one who yet fills everything here in my mind, and for whom I feel such true affection and reverence. We have been taking a charming walk among the beautiful rocks on the beach this evening with our kind friends the Edward's, who have received us most hospitably. It was lovely and strange; and often during the few hours I have yet spent here I have found my eyes filled with tears from emotions which I cannot describe the least, now that I have pen in hand to do it. It is such a mixture of the real and ideal,—of the world of present matter, and of spirit, giving life to everything. I wished, however, to make a distinct record of a sweet evening; and I ought, I am sure, to lie down to-night deeply impressed with thankfulness for the present improvement in papa and for the multitude of blessings which a quick glance backwards to the time I was at Hunstanton, when two years old, brings to my view; or, *would* bring, if I dared to wander back so far in my recollections."

In 1842 Joseph John Gurney's health seemed failing; yet, in opposition to the advice of the first physicians in the kingdom, he became a total abstainer and carried out an alteration in his household which forty years ago must have required a large amount of determination, strengthened by Divine help, to accomplish. Believing that the beer which was allowed to his servants, the labourers on the estate, and their friends

was a cause of harm and a "stumbling block" in the way of those efforts he was continually making for the spiritual well being of his household, he made up his mind, after much thought and prayer, to cast "the enemy" out of the house altogether, and to substitute instead a coffee tap to be opened in the hall and "a plentiful supply of hot coffee and bread to be kept for all who chose to partake." Anna refers to these circumstances in her journal:—

"*17th 12th mo.*, 1842.—What a time it is since I wrote! but I feel much relieved in being able to give a better account of papa. He has certainly improved much, especially the last week. He was a good deal troubled in mind about making arrangements for the servants having no beer, a plan which was difficult and disagreeable to execute. I can't say how I disliked it, though I have been obliged to confess that I did not *disapprove* it. But it has been truly *humbling*, and given trouble enough.

"On fourth day, the 30th, we had them all up in the drawing-room in the evening. I hid my face behind a screen while he told them his intentions. He had a very interesting meeting with them, ending in solemn prayer."

This was a true "Gospel temperance meeting."

In allusion to this event Joseph John Gurney writes a few weeks later:—

"All is peace and happiness this morning. What shall we render unto Thee, most gracious God and Father, for all Thy benefits? My health and spirits are greatly improved. Our household quiet and comfortable under the reformed system. May the leaven spread!"

In 1843 a missionary visit to the Continent was undertaken by Joseph and Eliza Gurney. Anna joined them at Paris. She describes her departure from

Earlham as being the "prelude to another and greater, and the end of quiet settlement at this darling home."

This refers to the prospect of marriage, which was now opening up before her. Her journal tells of earnest prayer for herself and her circle, and her desires that she may be "a real help and not a hindrance" to her parents in their "responsible work." The burden of souls was upon their hearts, and in each town they visited they sought out the little body of Protestants and endeavoured to cheer and stimulate them in their isolated positions. At Lyons she writes:—

"We left Paris on fourth day, after the dear parents had had a capital interview with the royal family, and were quite relieved. We have had some pleasant days travelling, and many interesting meetings and engagements of that nature. . . . Here the way has opened remarkably for meetings with the people, and though we entered the place as strangers, we are now surrounded with kind friends. I never felt anything more 'weighty' than some of these meetings; . . . but one after another has been wonderfully got through. To-night we are to have a gathering at this hotel, chiefly composed of that part of the Protestants who are not orthodox. . . .

"I have enjoyed very much being with [my parents], and am truly glad I came. We have sometimes had a peculiarly quiet, peaceful feeling, and after the bustle of home, too, the quiet hours in the carriage have been most refreshing to me. I like to meditate on the past, present, and future, as relates to myself. *Their* being full of occupation of late, I have been too much taken up for my good or comfort, and have especially been too much curtailed in my own Bible-reading, which never answers. To-day has been a very sweet one,

Our own quiet little meeting this morning was delightful, and the time for thought and reading since really valuable. I was so tired with a long day of standing about in the prisons yesterday, that I do not go out to-day at all scarcely; and I hope there has been some little coming back to the precious comforts, which I miss so far more than I need by neglecting to *seek* them. THE FORGIVING LOVE! how constantly one has to come back to *that!* I think I have felt it a little to-day, and surely I need it."

Two weeks later she writes at Congenies:—

"It has been so beautiful to me to see both sides of the picture, to watch one scene of labour presented after another. At first it all looks shaded, but by degrees the light breaks in, and the way opens for each concern as it comes, in a manner interesting to watch, and curiously *confirming* of our Quaker way of going to work. The effect of my mother's ministry has been most striking."

During some weeks her father was ill with fever, and Anna and her mother nursed the beloved patient in the village of Congenies far from home and friends; yet were they all preserved in much calmness and peace, and Anna's appreciation of her mother's skill and tact in the sick-room is strongly expressed in her journal.

After her father's recovery Anna enjoyed a bright month in the companionship of her betrothed, John Church Backhouse, who joined them part of the time in Switzerland. Anna writes just before leaving Bâle:—

"*First day.*—I have been reading an account of the crucifixion this morning, and also that splendid epistle to the Hebrews. So wonderful and so grand as it is! Oh to drink more deeply of that *boundless* love, and to know something of the 'unspeakable,' and that we

may not be in the least deceived, or in any way taking up a *false* rest! I do not like to go to bed without mentioning the very interesting evening which we have passed. A solemn meeting at first, then supper, and a memorable time with thirty-seven of the [missionary] students in the town. A fine set of young men they are, and animated apparently by a fine spirit. It was impossible not to look at them with great interest, many of them soon to leave, and *all* before five years are over to be scattered through the world. What a focus of light may that company be! And how much, poor things! they may have to suffer! Papa addressed them in a striking way, and the whole thing has been a delightful conclusion to our Swiss journey; an 'evening' as Dr. Pinkerton said, 'to be remembered by us all.'

"Parting with Switzerland is like parting with an old friend. What a delightful time, on the whole, we have had together here, and with those whom we have met."

Two weeks later she writes from Brussels:—

"*8th mo., 27th*, 1843. *First day.*—This is the best date of all. So near home, as it looks. We are all much pleased to be near the end of our expedition, most interesting as it has been. This day week we were at Stuttgard. I think our stay there was as interesting as any part of our journey. We were completely bird-limed till the king came home to be visited, and then our *striking, solemn* time with him and the queen and their children was long to be remembered, not only for its own interest, but as a proof that true, real concerns are always brought about in *some* way! We have had a rapid journey from Stuttgard, by the Rhine and railroads, and now hope to be off for England to-morrow. Papa returned thanks in our little meeting this morning for all the mercies we had ex-

perienced. Truly they have been many. How well I remember the end of our last journey, in 1841, and how I used to ponder on our return—on *papa's* marriage, as I do now on my own! I always thought I would not mind my own so much, and I do not in some ways, though at times I hardly know how to think of it, or realize to myself the idea of leaving home! I have thought much and deeply of it the last few days; and, oh that He who appointeth *all* for me may Himself condescend to bless *every* step *every* day! I long, as it were, to creep under *His* shelter in thinking of the effort and the excitement of the next two or three months; and have had some real comfort in reflecting on the mercies of a heavenly 'FATHER.' 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall *abide* under the shadow of the Almighty.' However far I may be from anything so blessed, yet *that* is what I *long* for, and what perhaps I may one day have a taste of."

In passing through Mannheim she felt deep interest in visiting the grave of one of John Church Backhouse's sisters, who had died on the Continent. She writes:—

"I could not help wondering if *she* saw me, and if she knew what I *was*, and was to *be*. It was very touching to see that lonely grave."

The return home was shaded by the death of a lovely young cousin, and Anna's warm heart went forth, as it was so often called upon to do in a large circle, with intense feeling. She says:—

"I had so often compared my prospects with hers, and thought of our married life beginning about the same time, and now *hers* was *over*—that lovely, sweet creature gone! . . . I never knew a family event that made the same impression on everybody. All the

young people—the young men as well as the girls—feel it exceedingly."

Like her father, Anna often enjoyed very near Christian fellowship with the younger and older members of their circle, whether belonging to the same community as herself, or attached to another. This is as it ought to be among those who belong to the same Lord.

The time was nearing when Anna was to leave the dear old home.

About a fortnight before her marriage her father writes:—

"After our comfortable family reading this morning I expressed my desire that, in the view of the approaching event, so deeply interesting to us all, we might be enabled to dwell near to the Fountain of light and life; and to move and live under the influence of that grace which can alone qualify for every duty, sanctify all the pleasures of life, and enable us rightly to bear its pains. We are favoured with the feeling of much quietness in the prospect, somewhat of a satisfying sense that all is right. . . .

"Dear Anna's school children have just been crowding the hall to receive new bonnets on the occasion of her marriage. Her labours of love for their benefit have been great and persevering; and I think it evident from their demeanour that she has not laboured in vain. Truly she will carry the blessing of many along with her."

During the last week of her unmarried life she writes:—

"I am very quiet in mind, surprisingly so to myself, and I have got through almost all my business. Oh! may it be, that in the coming week, over every interest and every conflict there may spread that sheltering wing

which is extended by the God of peace; and in hearty trust in Him may we be carried through each successive effort in His fear, and with quiet confidence in Him as *our Father!* I dare not touch on the details past or to come; but I think I may look forward to the hope of a happy tranquillity this day week. If I do not write again until my marriage, surely I must say before I end how greatly I desire to acknowledge, with deep thankfulness, the *innumerable mercies* I have received up to this point in life. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and *forget* not all His benefits!' I desire that this may be my motto: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the *mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not *conformed to this world:* but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'"

In her father's journal there is a notice of her marriage, which took place on November 8th, 1843:—

"11*th mo.*, 13*th.*—Surely we cannot review the past week without a feeling of reverent gratitude, adoration, and praise; for the God of all grace has dealt mercifully with us.

"The marriage took place on fourth day, the 8th; the meeting house in Goat Lane thronged. After our large company was seated, a good silence spread over us, and supplication fell to my lot under feelings of great solemnity; after which the pair spoke well; dear H. C. Backhouse prayed for a blessing on their Covenant; then William Forster, who has been our sympathizing and able helper throughout, spoke excellently on the fear of God. We returned home in peace, and sat down to the marriage feast, about fifty-five in number.

Before leaving the table we were favoured with a memorable opportunity [for religious fellowship and prayer]. It was, indeed, a most happy day; but I shed some tears of heartfelt grief when I had fairly lost my child."

On entering upon her new life at Darlington, Anna Backhouse records that the "same peace" which she had enjoyed in the old home "seemed to rule everything."

In her journal she says:—

"I miss papa's Christian spirit over me; but I desire to remember that, where we are providentially placed, there, if we prosper not, it is our own fault; and sometimes I do know and feel that my heavenly Father, in His forgiving love, does not cast me off.

"I have much enjoyed our daily readings. Oh! if we may indeed have abundance of the 'dew of Heaven,' I should have nothing left to wish for!"

Anna's married life was a very happy one. In October, 1844, came the additional blessing of the gift of a little son; and before the end of the year the Earlham grandparents visited Darlington, and the mother writes of the joy of showing to them "our darling boy." On another occasion she says:—

"Baby was perfectly good, and I do feel that the very great pleasure he will be, if he lives, to *them* is one of the chief happinesses connected with him, dear little fellow!"

She adds:—

One day "the four grandparents dined here, and dear baby descended in his night clothes to be exhibited. It was quite a pretty sight to see that poor little mortal, surrounded by all the elders, admiring him."

Anna's description of the visit to Earlham early in 1845 is very graphic:—

"J—— H——'s most welcome voice greeted us at the Norfolk Hotel, and we were soon bundled—baby, maids, luggage, and all—into the Earlham carriage. Happily, baby awoke as we drove up to the door, and was in an excellent mind, and ready for the seizure which ensued; three or four maids quarrelling about him in the hall, and every one calling loudly for him, as soon as we got upstairs. We found Aunt Fry and Louisa, Aunt Catharine and my father and mother all at dinner. But I must not attempt to say how they rejoiced over Jacky, or to give more than a very slight account of our visit. Aunt Fry [then failing in health] and her *suite* were at Earlham for two or three weeks of our stay, and I had a delightful opportunity of being with her. . . . Dearest Aunt Catharine was very nicely on the whole, though feeble, I thought. She extremely enjoyed baby, who was charmed with *her*. It gave me great delight to see her enjoyment in him. Then my father was most dear and delightful to me; rather diffieult to get at, his occupations absorb his mind so much; but I had him by scraps, and once or twice most pleasantly. It was the greatest treat to see him and his grandson together, especially when papa was resting in the afternoon, and baby came to him. With my mother the child was always in full gleé, and most kind she was to him."

This year was afterwards shaded by the loss of her beloved Aunt Fry and Uncle Buxton, both most cherished relatives. Two younger cousins also were taken away, and she desires to learn the lessons intended by such repeated proofs of the uncertainty of life.

Anna Backhouse did not confine her attentions to husband and child and the large circle around her, but her heart went forth to the poor, neglected children round their home at Blackwell. Her efforts on behalf

of these resulted in the establishment of a school, which under good teaching and her own supervision became excellent and quite a centre of influence in the district.

In 1846, five weeks were spent at Earlham, where "Jacky" was the delight of his grandfather. Very bright and peaceful was the intercourse with her father.

One more visit from him to Darlington was a great comfort to the daughter, who clung to her father with tender and intense affection. Afterwards she called to remembrance many details of that intercourse; it was the last, except by letter.

After his death she thus described the final interview she and her husband had with him :—

"He read a psalm, and then, kneeling down, poured out such a beautiful prayer for us. How I wish I could remember it every word! But I shall never forget the general impression of it, nor how it went to my very heart. He spoke of our 'sweet natural love' for each other, besought 'that this might increasingly become a spiritual union'; and then, for our child, 'that the yoke of obedience and parental authority might be firmly established on him, as the best preparation for the *yoke of Christ*'; and more, about bringing him up for the service of his Lord, which I cannot accurately remember. Then he prayed that the 'desire of our hearts might be given us'; that he himself, 'if consistent with the Divine will, might be permitted to see his children's children, and peace upon Israel!'

"When he rose from his knees, he sat a few moments, then kissed me, told me to take care of myself, and he *left me*—left me *for ever* in this world!"

She received many "happy letters" from her father after his return home. Then came what seemed at first a slight illness, probably the result of a fall from his

horse, which did not appear to affect him seriously at the moment, and then Anna's husband had to convey to her the sorrowful news that the honoured parent was no more. She writes in her journal:—

"I need not describe that next hour, in which he gradually broke to me the tidings, or the *awfulness* of the shock! It is better not to do it, but only to commemorate that even *then* we were not left to ourselves, but that with the *hurricane* came the sense of the shelter of the wing of our Father's love. Oh! how has that shelter been given us ever since! Such mercy calls for the deepest gratitude; and may I be enabled to be most entirely thankful to Him, who has not allowed the ship to sink even in *this* storm! Before I go on with my history of our mournful journey to Earlham, I am inclined to pause and, if I can, to define in some measure the effect on myself of this great change—its influence on our life, etc. And, first, can I wonder at it? Can I doubt that there was '*a need be*' in this case? How often have I thought lately that such prosperity as ours could not continue untouched. Life has been too swimming, too fully satisfying to the heart's affections to be permitted to go on. Now, oh! I can feel it to be stained! It is not absolutely that the necessaries of one's social life are taken away. On the contrary, I have cause for deep thankfulness that my husband and child are left me; but it is impossible to find words to describe how the zest of the pleasure of every constituent part of my home life is fled. . . .

"Sometimes we have had a sweet feeling that He will not leave us or forsake us; and sometimes, as I said before, I have known something of the shelter of His wing. I have desired perfectly to submit to the dispensation, which includes the loss of my sweetest pleasures.

What can my visits to Norfolk be now? Where can the delight of intercourse with my own be? But to return to my history. My darling husband did indeed help and soothe my sorrow. I think I shall never forget, not only his sympathy for me, but his sharing the affliction so entirely. Those days look like a *strange dream*, but one I shall never forget. We had a *coupé* and reached London on fifth day evening. I felt wholly stunned, like a person under an immense weight; as if I could not yet receive my share of the event, but could only muse and wonder at it. The next day we went on to Earlham. Oh! the faint, *sick* feeling of that arrival! . . . I cannot describe the *minutiæ* of my stay at Earlham. It tires me too much to write. A few things only will I mention; and, first, the loveliness of those dear remains. The clay was emphatically *beautiful*, almost heavenly—the noble forehead only reminding by its coldness that it was altered since my hand had passed over it before. . . . He lay in his dressing room—*my* old room! Most sweet to me was the full belief that that beautiful form was the seed of the far more beautiful heavenly one; that even *that* precious form I may see again, though doubtless 'glorified'! I have not much to say of the funeral. It was wonderfully interesting as a spectacle. The crowded roads, the mourning city, would have been most touching in any case; but that very sort of interest took off a little, to my feelings, from the settled solemnity of the day, except at the grave, where the silence was as peaceful as it was awful and profound! and in the evening, when a most lovely memoir of him, written by my mother, was read.

"As to ministry, not only then, but all through those days, we were permitted to feel what we had lost—not

only *himself*, as if that were not enough, but Uncle Buxton and Aunt Fry; all seemed gone together."

A few words about her mother we cannot omit:—

"To *her*, dear creature, I feel as if I had acquired a new and strong tie. With the keenest sense of the *weight* of the sorrow and desolation that presses upon her, I have had, at the same time, a consciousness of being *helped* by her in a remarkable way! I feel bound for *life* to her, not only from inclination, but from the strongest sense of duty; and heartily desire that I and mine may always prove faithful to this dear one, who is, as it were, bequeathed to our tenderest care. . . . She was eminently supported by grace, but I am afraid she has drooped more and more since we left her, and no wonder! Oh! the utter loneliness of her position!"

The next event of deep interest in Anna Backhouse's life was the birth of her little girl in the spring of 1847. She thus refers to her in a letter to her mother's sister in America:—

"I look forward to going to [my mother] in the summer with my little boy and my new little daughter (named Eliza Jane). I shall enjoy to show *her* my baby, but I need not tell thee how sorrowful is the feeling that I can never show her to *him*—unless indeed when we may through mercy be permitted to meet, 'a family in heaven.'"

In the summer Anna accomplished this proposed visit to Earlham. Her mother gives a touching description of her altered appearance: "her pallid cheek, her wasted form, the soft lustre of her hazel eye, rendered unnaturally bright by a warm hectic glow, which all told, too plainly, that she was come to take a *final* leave of those scenes of her happy childhood; that her sun was going down 'while it was yet day.'"

During this stay at Earlham the sudden death of her father-in-law came upon her as a heavy shock. She was too feeble to return with her husband to Darlington.

Her mother speaks further of this visit and of her departure to a foreign clime in search of health :—

"It would be difficult to describe her as she then appeared, without seeming to sketch an exaggerated picture. Though the tear was often in her eye, as the remembrance of the past came vividly before her, and though her bodily sufferings were not small, from cough, debility, etc.; yet did this youthful Christian's lovely countenance look so serene, so placid, and so *heaven-bound*, that one was almost ready to rejoice that the short but stormy voyage of life was nearly over, and bid the little bark 'God speed' into the port of everlasting blessedness. After passing about eleven weeks at Earlham, during which there was but little apparent improvement, her watchful and anxious husband (by the advice of the medical men, and in accordance with her own inclinations) was induced to try the effect of change of climate, and accordingly, toward the latter part of the ninth month, they set out for the Continent, not having any very definite plan in view, but designing to continue travelling south, until they met with a more genial atmosphere."

During the first stages of this journey Anna Backhouse seemed to improve, losing her cough for a time and often being able really to enjoy the softer air and pleasant scenes; but not at first, for the feeling would come, as she so naturally tells her mother, of how her father would have appreciated everything—scenery, flowers, fruit, etc.

Her letters to her mother and others are so pleasant,

giving descriptions of the scenery and bright little incidents about Johnny; such as the following, to her cousin Richenda Buxton :—

"Johnny's extreme desire to get the postillion's long whip wherever we change horses prompts him to use all the French in his possession, and I hear him shouting from the box, '*Postillon, donnez-moi, s'il vous plait.*' His admiration is for the rivers. Whenever we go over one, he says, 'See, mamma; isn't that a petty iver?' The other day I promised him an apple when we got to the inn. Directly we drove up to the door, he seized on it, by my leave. At that moment a beggar came up to the window: 'O mamma! se wants somepen to eat. Sall I give her my apple?' 'If thou likes, dear.' Instantly he popped it into her hand and was quite content. These stories for *Aunt* Catharine, with my dearest love; let it go to her and Earlham, please."

The illness and death of the little baby cast a shadow over the latter part of the journey. She had been frequently ailing, and the anxiety for her no doubt retarded the mother's progress. Anna Backhouse writes from Leghorn :—

"Most peacefully she breathed her little life away on Sarah's lap, while her father and I were watching her. I am tired this morning, and cannot say all I would about this event. Her dear father and I have, indeed, bitterly wept for our darling, and I have sometimes felt in my weak state as if I should be almost *crushed!* But our tender heavenly Father has not forsaken us. He has lifted up the light of His countenance upon us, and given at times a feeling of peace, which calms everything; so that I trust we have been enabled to resign our little one without murmuring into the hands of Him who lent us the treasure for a short season.

The question is much before me, why such repeated chastenings visit us, with the earnest desire that He who is pleased to inflict them will cause them to work for our profit, and draw us yet nearer to Himself. My precious husband and I have been most closely united in drinking this cup of sorrow, and I do not wish for any one in the world beside him. We brought our little one here to her grave on first day morning, and felt sweet peace as we stood by her little tomb."

At Rome the cough, which had again been very trying, was wonderfully better, and she says to her beloved Aunt Catharine Gurney:—

"Now I sleep delightfully. John and I have just been taking a walk in the Borghese Gardens, which are near here—a lovely place, with seats for poor old people like me to repose upon. It was beautifully warm. I was sorry that I had forgotten my parasol, though I did not find thy plaid shawl too warm over my thick satin frock. The shawl looks very nice, and is most useful. I wish I could show thee the beautiful fountains with which these gardens are interspersed; the sounds of running and dropping water everywhere would just please thee. It makes me rather sad to see the ladies walking about with their little girls. How many happy dreams of future companionship I had with my little Tot! But, dear child! I believe she would have suffered much had she lived; so I am sure I ought not to wish her back."

On January 2nd the invalid wrote a long, cheerful letter to her mother, and many were the hopes entertained that she would return to England in restored health. The prevalence of very cold winds, however, was unpropitious, and the travellers went on to Palermo in search of a more congenial climate. The morning

after their arrival a revolution broke out, and for three days it was impossible to go outside the house on account of the disturbed state of the town.

In spite of these unfavourable circumstances Anna Backhouse made herself quite comfortable, and she seemed to improve in health. On the evening of January 16th the English were invited by the captain of the *Bull Dog* to take refuge on that steamer, and John C. Backhouse had his wife most carefully conveyed on board. The next day she breakfasted with the company; but while on deck during the morning sudden illness came on, and it soon became evident that there, in the harbour of Palermo, on the deck of a man-of-war, amid the roaring of cannon and the ringing of bells, the home-call had come to her.

Three physicians were on board at the time, and they with her husband and the officers of the ship and the servants did all that was possible to save the precious life. All around was anxiety and alarm, but she remained calm, taking leave of her husband and child and of her maids, who loved their mistress devotedly.

Her husband writes:—

"She said to me, 'My love, I shall not be here long now; I am going to Jesus and dearest papa.' On my replying, 'Oh no, dear,' she most sweetly answered, '*Yes, I am;* I shall soon be with Him. I am indeed going. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' . . . She afterwards said: 'Farewell; my dearest, farewell. I wish I had made thee a better wife. This is hard for thee, but look to Jesus—love Him—live to Him; and our darling Johnny, do bring him up in the *right* way. Give him a good education, and let him be brought up as a Friend.' . . .

"She afterwards said: 'I shall soon be gone. I am *so* happy. It is Jesus makes me happy. I did hope to

have had a more quiet end, but this is a very public one. It is a strange place to die in. I know it is very painful to you all, and for *thee*, my dearest, it will be sad for thee to be left; but don't forget to build on Jesus. I am quite happy and comfortable, dear. Farewell all; give my love to my dear mother and Richenda and Sarah Gurney, and all.' . . .

"For a short time at the first we had a hope that she would revive. I cannot describe the intensity of feeling with which I watched each change of her countenance. But from the beginning, the words she uttered, 'I am going to Jesus,' had nearly deprived me of any expectation of her recovery. It was, indeed, an awful time—so sudden, so unexpected, and in *such a spot!*

"Every one on board was most kind, and nothing could exceed the feeling attention of Captain Key. He ordered a place on deck, where the dear remains could be placed until the coffin was ready for them; and there I took my child to behold for the *last* time his *mother!*"

The officers of the ship accompanied the bereaved husband in taking the remains to a temporary resting place, and before his return to England they were laid by the side of her infant daughter at Leghorn.

John C. Backhouse on landing in England took his little boy to Earlham to pass a few days with the mother who could so deeply sympathize with him. His sister came to him, and returned with him to his lonely home, and was his companion till in 1858 he in turn was called to rejoin the wife he so fondly loved.

Under the fostering care of this dear aunt "Johnny" grew up to give promise of amply repaying the Christian and intellectual training which it had been his privilege to enjoy. But just as he had entered upon early manhood, and before the completion of his twenty-fifth

year, suddenly the earthly hopes grew dim, and quickly receded before the brightness of the glory beyond; and then those who had once been a little family on earth were again together in the Father's house.

We have not been able suitably to weave into our narrative the following letter, which gives us a *résumé* of the character of Anna Backhouse from the standpoint of one who was an intimate cousin of hers. The writer, Priscilla Johnston, was the wife of Andrew Johnston, M.P., and the eldest daughter of Sir Fowell Buxton and his devoted helper in his great philanthropic works. She was well able to enter into sympathy with Anna Backhouse. The letter is dated Halesworth, Feb. 8th, 1848.

"My dear ——, I have thought so very much of you and —— since hearing of the event which fills all our thoughts, that I *must* write and tell you how truly I do feel it for you. Yet is there not very much to comfort under, and even *reconcile*, this startling dispensation? I mean the manner of her departure. Surely the *real* pain was in giving her up to go that journey, with the heavy forebodings of it. And to have had her spared lingering illness in a foreign land—*translated* without suffering—and so quickly, is enough to reconcile us to the shock, great as it has been! How highly characteristic was her behaviour in that awful hour—so calm, steady, and right minded! I have been much impressed, in thinking of her, with her peculiar characteristics, and in remembering her at different periods of her life. She has risen before me with the utmost vividness. I only *wish* I could *retain*, either with pencil or pen, the lively images of her I now recall—first, as a little child in that large nursery at Earlham; then a little older with J—— H—— as I saw them brought to our dear Aunt Rachel's dying

bedside. That was a beautiful scene! After that I recall her indistinctly for some years of her life, with Hannah Lean (her governess), under Aunt Catharine's care. Then, too, her sweetness in dear Aunt Mary's time, and her spirit and brightness as a schoolroom child. But after the death of that dear mother, how did she step forward in a new position! and what did she not become as a daughter! The religious principles which had been so early, diligently, and deeply planted in her began now more especially to show their *fruits*. She had naturally a peculiar *love of service*, a true taste for being of use, and as her character developed, *duty* was its pole star. She remarkably balanced and proportioned her duties, and, to our view, seemed never to fail in them. It was a most *rare* post that she now filled. Her father's dependence on her was intense. Her unvarying devotedness to him was united with uncommon wisdom, cheerfulness, and simplicity, such as one is not often to see. I was staying at Earlham, in the summer of 1836 (after Aunt Mary's death), and never can forget the touching dependence he had upon her, and the *grace* with which, though only a child of fifteen, she filled *that post*. Again, I saw the same thing at Rennyhill in the same autumn; and then how did she assist and strengthen him in the tremendous effort of duty he made in leaving her and J—— H—— to go to America!

"In 1839, during his absence, I was again staying some time at Earlham, and then I saw her in the character of *sister*. Of this I need not speak; but I think it was *unequalled*. . . . The next image I strongly recall is when she came to nurse Chenda in the measles; and this leads me to remember the treasure *we* have lost, the faithful, efficient, and dependable friend and relation. There were *few*, indeed, whose company I would so

desire, or whose judgment and example I would more profit from. In these years, too, the sight of her in the 'eleven-sided attic,' with her Sunday scholars, is memorable. Her unforgetting attentions to H. Scarnell and Nurse Norman, and all her sweetness and fragrance as the very flower of Earlham! Then I recall the scenes (as described, for I did not *see* them) of her father's return from America and of his marriage. I *did* see her as step-daughter; but I shall borrow the words of the mother she so truly loved to describe her in this capacity. Who could do it so well? She writes to me:

"'Never has that dear one shone more brightly than in her *generous, noble, loving, most unselfish conduct* to myself. In the first place, when I was the innocent means of robbing her of that uncommon dependence which had for several years been placed upon her, and *in* which (though she was often weighted by it) she greatly delighted. Then her most dutiful, affectionate, and truly tender conduct to us *both*, entering with such delight into our pleasures, and giving us the very *depth* and *fulness* of her young heart's sympathy in all our pains. But, above all, how lovely, how exalted, how far beyond all praise was the self-sacrificing spirit with which she sought in our *common* sorrow to lay aside the sense of her *own* heart-breaking portion of it while she devoted all her energies to cheer and comfort *me*. Dear, precious child! in the fulfilment of her various duties *I* never saw her *equalled*, and none will ever know *what I* have lost.'

"The next picture that rises is of herself on her wedding day! Her pale, elevated look, when she first entered the meeting; her happy smile afterwards; her charming demeanour through the day, thoughtful of *every one*, full of feeling, yet perfectly steady and like

herself—the stay of all others. That day is, indeed, memorable—*both* our fathers in such brightness! and the whole scene a crown of Earlham gatherings! I am glad to have it fixed in my mind, though now so clothed with melancholy. I saw her many times afterwards, but not so much or so closely thrown with her again till we had the privilege of spending a few days at Blackwell in 1846. There she was shining, indeed, as wife, mother, mistress, neighbour—truly a blessing to the world around her. I saw her at Beechwood, at Polam, in her own little school, with her neighbours poor and rich—everywhere the same Anna: quiet, judicious, enlarged, hopeful, generous, and encouraging; the most loving, dutiful daughter-in-law, niece, and cousin. Oh, what a hopeless vacancy is there left—a place that cannot be filled!

"I next met her in January, 1847; and even in *that* scene, how was she still herself! I can never forget her on the day of *his funeral.* It is sorrowful to remember her *marble face,* so lovely, yet almost fearfully calm, holding her place even there, in those rooms, and with every one. I was frightened at it at the time; and it is painful to remember it now. Did she *ever* recover that grief? *I* think *not,* though other things combined to undermine her health. Only once more did I see her at Earlham; in August, 1847—not six months ago! What a picture of refinement, of chastened feeling, of quiet resolution, and, above all, of deep religious trust and experience! She was such a reasonable, sensible, manageable invalid—free from self-will, and making the best and easiest of everything, while she conducted everything with power and decision. I parted from her with strong love and admiration, and a *deep fear,* though not without hope. In herself hope predomi-

nated. She told me she *expected to return*, though perfectly aware of the risk of her critical state. I saw her unexpectedly for a moment at the railway station at Stratford; like herself was every part of her behaviour in that bustle and agitation, and this was my *last* sight of her, dear, dear creature! I deeply feel, in the contemplation of her whole course and character, that something unequalled in many respects is gone from amongst us. There was combined with her grace such remarkable wisdom, enlargement, and affection; such peculiarly sound and dependable *conduct* in all the turns of life: that we can but feel that a standard is removed from our circle, and that *we*—(*our world*)—*we and our children* are truly and lastingly the *poorer*. The great loss of all—the *unspeakable* loss of her husband and child—these cannot be *touched* by me! But oh! my heart *does ache* for John Church. I mourn for that darling Jacky, unconscious of his inexpressible privation!

"May we, as long as we remember *her* (which surely will be for *life*), remember her *example*, and *seek to follow it!*"

SHOWING FORTH THE PRAISES OF THE LORD.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

To sojourn in the world, and yet apart;
To dwell with God, yet still with man to feel;
To bear about for ever in the heart
The gladness which His presence doth reveal.

"The fact that we are God's makes it worth while to do all we can with our lives—to make them useful and beautiful for His sake. To do this, He has promised us guidance, and He gives it us in many ways, some of them quite obvious. Where there is a direct, specific command, our duty is always at least clear, though it may be difficult. But most often the command is general, and its scope has to be gathered from the outlying indications of His pleasure. The circumstances in which we find ourselves, form in most cases, the outward framework of His appointment for us. We find ourselves daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, acquaintances. The relations we hold are *sacred indications of duty*. It is not secular, it should not be distracting, it ought to be part of our Christian life, to realize, say, as sister, what God means us to be in that relation. To make home lovely and full of good influences, and the cheerful centre of elevating pursuits and soothing relaxations, should be the duty made sure of first of all. And is not this 'definite work for another world'? One may live to think so, when brothers for the want of it have learned to seek excitement and interest apart from sisterly companionship. Not that our interest and care ought to be confined to the family circle. Only, that innermost circle should be attended to first. Then let it widen naturally and unobtrusively. The families of your tradespeople, the children of your laundress, the health of your dressmaker, the lonely afternoons of your elderly commonplace acquaintance, the lesson given where it is needed and cannot be paid for; it is endless to glance at the outlets for Christian love. The only necessity is that we get plenty of it, and *that we do not despise very modest openings* for its exercise.

"If the kingdom of God is within us, we need not draw dividing lines between sacred and secular pursuits. A high motive may leaven all we do. The same occupation may be a Christian duty to one person, and a miserable waste of time to another. The art of living to the best purpose is one to tax all the loving intelligence we can bring, and to show us more than anything else how humbly we should wait on God to be taught. He can make us of quick understanding. The sense of proportion and fitness will help us. The mere pleasure we take in doing a thing, so that it is not merely frivolous pastime, will be one guide, since we are likely to do best what we do with pleasure. The wishes of our friends should have great weight.

"And when we have thought and prayed and tried, after all no two persons will form exactly the same opinion as to how any life ought to be lived. It may be that it is intentionally left to each one, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to form his own ideal of how best to follow the steps of the one blessed life. One cannot judge for another."—*Extracted from "Woman's Work in the Great Harvest Field," Sept.*, 1880.

IX.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.[1]

BORN, DECEMBER 14TH, 1836. DIED, JUNE 3RD, 1879.

WHEREVER the English language is spoken there must some of the written words of Frances Ridley Havergal have penetrated. And from natives of France, Germany, Russia, Ceylon, testimonies flow in of the blessing her words have been to them also. In Switzerland her leaflets, "Seulement pour Toi," "Sans Christ," and "L'Invitation Royale," are accepted and treasured. Even in far off Japan her "Morning Bells" and "Little Pillows" are translated and widely circulated. The literary work of this devoted child of God, as far as the outside world is concerned, only covers ten short years, yet her influence and name are felt and known everywhere.

Frances Ridley Havergal's life is too well known for us to think of giving a detailed sketch of it, but the suggestion of one who knew her intimately has strengthened our own opinion that among examples of Christian womanhood "there ought to be a niche" reserved for her name. We believe that there are points in her

[1] The information contained in this chapter has been principally obtained from "Memorials of F. R. Havergal," by her sister, and "Such a Blessing!" by J. T. Wrenford, Vicar of St. Paul's, Newport, by kind permission of the authors.

life which require to be lingered over, and we propose to call attention to some special teaching in her *consecrated* life.

Frances Havergal did not enter upon a life of consecration because she had come to the end of every worldly enjoyment, and had found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. She had lived a Christian life, serving her Lord as far as she knew His will. She had served Him in Sabbath classes and in other ways among the uneducated, and all this work had been thoroughly done and had been blessed. Her pen and her literary powers had been given to Him without reserve. She might have won a high reputation in quite different paths of literature. She esteemed it to be her privilege to give to others the treasures belonging only to that good land to which she wished to attract all who came within the range of her influence.

It must not be supposed that her work was all directly religious, though it was her aim in everything to live to the glory of God. As a daughter her unshrinking obedience was marvellous, and the sweetness with which she bore the upsetting of many a pet scheme was indeed an example; while as sister and aunt a great variety of service was called for at her hands, and cheerfully and unselfishly rendered. To the young ones of her family circle she was a most attractive and lively companion. In the social circle she had large influence. She had sedulously cultivated her mind; her musical and artistic talents had been highly developed, and she was a gifted composer and harmonist. Besides all this, every womanly employment that fell to her lot was quickly and skilfully accomplished. Her unselfishness was remarkable, and though the means at her disposal were only moderate, yet, through the exercise

of persistent self-denial, she was enabled to practise a marvellous liberality.

From the time of her conversion till her full surrender of herself to God she often felt a craving for something better than the variations incident to so many Christian lives. She was not conscious of holding anything back from her Lord, but the full spiritual power and fulness of blessing were not hers. She breathes forth her unsatisfied longing in one of her earlier poems, "Master, say on!" She writes:—

"Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth;
Master! let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?

. . . . .

Master, speak! I do not doubt Thee,
Though so tearfully I plead;
Saviour, Shepherd! oh, without Thee
Life would be a blank indeed!
But I long for fuller light,
Deeper love, and clearer sight.

. . . . .

Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
Master, speak, oh, speak to me!"

The Lord was leading His child by the right way, teaching her that He only must be all her salvation and all her desire.

Madame Guyon, although a Christian, passed through

an experience of desolation and of dissatisfaction in everything during seven years, until she found in God, and not in His gifts, however precious they might be, the full rest and satisfaction that her soul required.

We do not say that Frances Havergal had this sense of desolation, but she was not fully satisfied. Let us hear her own estimate of herself in 1865, while to those around she appeared to be a devoted, consistent Christian. We see in the following passage how real was her desire to be wholly the Lord's. She writes :—

"I had hoped that a kind of table land had been reached in my journey, where I might walk awhile in the light, without the weary succession of rock and hollow, crag and morass, stumbling and striving; but I seem borne back into all the old difficulties of the way, with many sin-made aggravations. I think the great root of all my trouble and alienation is that I do not now make an unreserved surrender of myself to God; and until this is done I shall know no peace. I am sure of it. I have so much to regret: a greater dread of the opinion of worldly friends, a loving of the world, and proportionate cooling in heavenly desire and love. A power utterly new and unexpected was given me [singing and composition of music], and rejoicing in this I forgot the Giver, and found such delight in this that other things paled before it. It need not have been so; and, in better moments, I prayed that if it were indeed hindering me the gift of song might be withdrawn. And now that through my ill health [1] it is so, and that the pleasure of public applause when singing in the philharmonic concerts is not again to exercise its delicious delusion, I do thank Him who heard my prayer. But I

[1] This was a temporary inability to use her powers.

often pray in the dark, as it were, and feel no response from above. Is this to test me? Oh that I may be preserved from giving up in despair, and yielding, as I so often do, to the floodtide enemy!

"I want to make the most of my life and to do the best with it, but here I feel my desires and motives need much purifying; for, even where all would sound fair enough in words, an element of self, of lurking pride, may be detected. Oh that He would indeed purify me and make me white at any cost! No one professing to be a Christian at all could possibly have had a more cloudy, fearing, doubting, sinning, and wandering heart history than mine has been through many years."

She had been a Christian for more than twenty years when in 1873 a little book on full surrender and its blessed results, entitled "All for Jesus," was sent to her.

A correspondence with its author followed.[1] She tells him of having long rejoiced in Jesus as her Lord and Master. She speaks of His having been "infinitely more precious" to her for some time past, His service "infinitely sweeter and freer" than formerly; and yet she feels she does "not even understand the deliverance from the dominion of sin."

Her correspondent told her of the power and willingness of Jesus to keep her from falling, and that the cleansing power of His blood was continuous. He wrote:—

"You fear saying 'no sin' even for a single hour. But then Jesus is able to keep you from falling into sin, if you have faith in Him for it; *i.e. conscious* sin. And abiding in Him His blood cleanseth (*i.e. goes on* cleansing) from unconscious sin, as well as from actual sinning

[1] See "Such a Blessing!" Partridge & Co.

when confessed. For conscious sin there is instant confession and instant forgiveness."

This clear exposition of the standing of a redeemed child who longs to be kept by the power of God and to be used for His service, came home to a heart prepared to receive it—rather, hungering and thirsting for light and teaching and help. She says these words were "like an electric spark firing a lime light."

Again she says, referring to these truths, "I see it all, and I have the blessing."

Frances Havergal's first longing was to be taught of God, and she refrained from saying much about her newly found treasure till she had realized fully that the possession had become entirely hers. She had always dreaded speaking much about her inner experiences to human friends, however intimate. Her desire was ever to the Lord, to hear what He would say to her. She now looked out the passages on holiness in the Scriptures; and as she longed with intense craving to know the truth, the Divine light illumined the page, and she saw that the promises covered her deepest needs.

In her experiences of trial and temptation which immediately followed she realized that the keeping power of the Lord was no fiction. In the temptation so common in daily life to give expression in some way to feelings of annoyance at anything vexatious in the conduct or words of another, she found that the Lord was with her to uphold and deliver. As she looked to Him while one proposition after another was presented to her mind to show "righteous indignation" towards one who had injured her, she found that, in due time, every feeling of anger or annoyance or of pain had been removed, and the oil and wine of the kingdom were poured into the wounded spirit in the shape of passages

of Scripture which were entirely appropriate and such as she could not have chosen for herself. And then in excruciating physical suffering the rest of soul, in leaning utterly upon the infinite tenderness and wisdom of her Lord, was such that she felt she had no choice at all about her future service. Service meant suffering His will just as much as working actively for Him.

Does any one ask the secret of the fuller joy and power for service of her future life? May we not answer that she counted Him faithful who had promised? She believed that what He had promised He was able also to perform. Thus taking Him at His word, she received fuller light to understand and fuller power to accept His gracious assurances; and abiding under the continuous cleansing, she became as a vessel "kept for the Master's use." He cannot use continually a vessel that is not always ready for His use. Many vessels are used by the King only occasionally, because they *continually* require so much cleansing and preparation."

Let us have a few of Frances Havergal's own words after this change:—

"I have for some time delighted in God's Word, but nearly every chapter now has a new force and fulness and a bearing upon all this which I never saw till recently. I find that elementary truths are as new as if I had never learned them at all, especially the sinfulness of sin and the preciousness of the blood of Christ. I never hated sin as I do now; and though I honestly thought I had given myself without reserve to Christ in full consecration, yet I see that there was unconscious reserve of many little things. Now, I can give up *all*—prejudices, appearances, just everything, to Him. And it does not seem any question of self-denial or sacrifice, but that I am 'willing,' through His grace, 'in the day

of His power.' I want to obey Him to the full—to follow His very least whisper or intimation. I should like to serve Him, and witness for Him, as I have never yet done (I do not mean as to *quantity*—for I have been giving my whole time and strength—but as to *quality*); and yet I believe that, if He laid His hand upon me to-morrow, and put me entirely aside for months or years, He would give me grace to be just as satisfied and happy in His will, as if He gave me a greater share of physical strength for much work in His vineyard. So I have not the shadow of a shade of care about either present or future things, temporal or spiritual. Now, *ought* I not to praise Him? I cannot keep it in!

"I have been thinking over my long-pleaded promise, John xiv. 21, 23, and asking for a larger fulfilment. It seems to me that sanctified expectation cannot go beyond what God means in His promises, any more than an echo can out-ring the original sound which called it forth.

"I have been smiling at myself! I caught myself deliberately wondering whether, take it altogether, God ever was quite as good to anybody else as to me! I do not think if I were actually in heaven I could see much more clearly how '*all* His paths' have been 'mercy and truth' to me. There is a dazzle of brightness upon even the darkest moments of my life; they all shine out in the glory of His love, *even those which must still remain enigmas.*"

Then again she says:—

"It is so unspeakably sweet to feel that He has given me *full* acquiescence in the little details of His will, as well as in greater things."

Then with regard to speaking for her Lord she writes:—

"I have given up my very lips to Jesus, and He certainly does put words in them which I feel are not my own at all, and which do not fall to the ground. I am now enabled to trust Him entirely in the matter—not planning, or puzzling, or even wondering what to say, but leaving it all for Him to supply when the moment of need arrives. Is it too much to ask that He will guide my every word?"

Her sister's testimony is very telling; she writes:—

"The practical effect of this was most evident in her daily, true-hearted, whole-hearted service for her King, and also in the increased joyousness of the unswerving obedience of her home life, the surest test of all."

Unlike the many who avoid the roughnesses of daily life, she had long accepted them all, and it was through acquiescence in this hard and continuous discipline, as well as in deep and sore heart trials, that her feet became so swift in the strait path to the kingdom.

Frances Havergal writes a few months after she had accepted the full salvation—salvation from the power as well as the penalty of sin:—

"I am so conscious of His direct teaching and guidance, through His Word and Spirit, in the matter that I cannot think I can ever unsee it again. I have waited many months before writing this, so it is no new and untested theory to me; in fact, experience came before theory. It is 'not as though *I* had already attained either were already perfect; but I follow after, . . . I press *toward* the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'"

Henceforth, except when illness laid her aside, the life of Frances Havergal was a life of service which brought rich results. But we need not make an exception, for the times of illness brought out special

lessons for others through her patience and joyful submission to her Lord's will. A hymn she wrote about this time tells its own story from her heart-life. We give one stanza :—

"The fulness of His blessing encompasseth our way ;
The fulness of His promises crowns every brightening day ;
The fulness of His glory is beaming from above ;
While more and more we realize the fulness of His love."

We must refer to two more passages in her consecrated life. They show that she was ready to follow the Lord whithersoever He was pleased to lead *her*. She did not judge others who were not called into the same paths ; she felt that it was her joyful privilege to look for direction for herself, and when she saw the guiding Hand simply to follow. She writes :—

"The Lord has shown me another little step, and, of course, I have taken it with extreme delight. 'Take my silver and my gold,' now means shipping off all my ornaments (including a jewel cabinet, which is really fit for a countess), to the Church Missionary House, where they will be accepted and disposed of for me. I retain only a brooch or two for daily wear, which are memorials of my dear parents ; also a locket with the only portrait I have of my niece in heaven, my Evelyn ; and the 'two rings,' mentioned in 'Under the Surface.' But these I redeem, so that the whole value goes to the Church Missionary Society. I had no idea I had such a jeweller's shop, nearly fifty articles are being packed off. I don't think I need tell you I never packed a box with such pleasure."

The other passage refers to the use of her musical powers. She was convinced that the right occupation of these talents was a part of her ministry, and she

carried out her decision to sing only sacred pieces. She found even in mixed companies that the singing of Scripture words led the way for unsettled or seeking souls to open out their difficulties to her.

One day she told her sister the cause of her adopting this course. "It is a long time ago that I made the choice of singing sacred music *only*. I did so some months before I wrote—

> 'Take my lips, and let me sing
> Always, only, for my King.'

"I was visiting at Perry Villa when Dr. Marshall sent me the programme of the next Kidderminster concert, and strongly urged me to sing the part of Jezebel in the 'Elijah,' saying that he could not depend on any one else for it. I knew I *could* do it; for once, at the practice, the doctor said I threw such life into it. Mentioning it to Mr. Snepp, he expressed surprise, and his words struck me: 'How can a Christian girl personate Jezebel?' So I thought about it, saw the inconsistency, and gave it up. I think the last thing I sang in the hall was 'Come unto Him!' Then at Leamington, the first large party I went to they asked me to sing, and I sang, 'Whom having not seen ye love.' . . . For myself, I have more confidence in singing Scripture words than any other, because they are *His*. And, Marie dear, as I sing I am praying, too, that it may soothe or reach some one, though I may never know whom."

Wherever she went she sought to interest and help all around; the poor, the servants, and those nearest and dearest, who are often the most difficult to speak to on spiritual subjects, came under her helpful influence. Latterly she was a whole-hearted and earnest

worker in the temperance cause, becoming a pledged abstainer, because she found that in this way only she could practically influence others in any large degree.

Not only by her written and spoken words, but by her "sunny ways," the heartiness she threw into the games of children, her keen enjoyment of every-day interests, as well as by the brightness of her face, did Frances Havergal's Christian life witness to the happiness of "following fully." Her sister says, "Often I have been told: 'F. R. H. looks so happy; she must have something we have not.'"

We cannot close this chapter without dwelling a little upon her literary work, through which she had so large a ministry in pointing the sin-sick soul to the Saviour, and not less in building up the believer.

From a child she had written hymns and verses. When she thought she was just entering into literary life "with a bound" in 1860, she was turned back to wait. She had the talent for writing and the desire to assist others from her own experience; but like Moses, who sought to help his people forty years before the Lord's time, Frances Havergal had *her* time of waiting and deepening experience to pass through before she was fully prepared for her life work.

In 1860 her physician had said she must choose between writing and living. Strength was however given her, and in her Lord's time she began her career as a writer. In 1869 she came before the Christian public with her little volume "Ministry of Song," realizing the "wisdom of having been kept nine years waiting in the shade." She herself says: "I have a strong belief that if I am to write to any good purpose, a great deal of *living* must go to a very little *writing*, and that this is why I have always been held back from

writing a tithe of what I wanted to write; and I see the wisdom of it."

With regard to her poetry, it is interesting that though her first book, "Ministry of Song," was published in 1869, many of those world-known poems were written in her teens. We remember being struck with the reality of her early hymns and poems, when it seemed as if every line came directly out of her own history. We learn now that it was so, and the later hymns tell of a deepening experience.

Her poems and hymns are characterized, not only by original thoughts, but by a delicate appreciation of varied phases of feeling and life given in flowing, rhythmical language. "Compensation" and "Autobiography" and others, which those who read will discover for themselves, touch upon some of the subtler aspects of deep, hidden feeling. In the "Turned Lesson" her own experience, with that of so many others, of disappointment in various ways is given through the picture of a child at school sorrowfully poring over the returned book. The description of the child's feeling, together with the inner meaning, is well rendered. Here is one stanza; the teacher is speaking to the child:—

> "Then the gentle voice was heard,
> 'Now I will try you again!'
> And the lesson was mastered,—every word!
> Was it not worth the pain?
> Was it not kinder the task to turn
> Than to let it pass,
> As a lost, lost leaf that she did not learn?"

A literary critic thus calls attention to her last poems in "Under His Shadow." "In this are choice fragments, sweet hymns, delicious lyrics; but for high

soaring, almost *Miltonic grandeur*, commend us to the first poem, upon 'The Thoughts of God.' It has filled us with awe and bowed us to tears. A specimen of the poetic glory of this marvellous hymn upon God's thoughts, in the closing passage, follows upon Frances R. Havergal's sublime description of those thoughts so infinitely above ours."

We append the passage referred to above :—

"They say there is a hollow, safe and still,
A point of coolness and repose
Within the centre of a flame, where life might dwell
Unharmed and unconsumed, as in a luminous shell,
Which the bright walls of fire inclose
In breachless splendour, barrier that no foes
Could pass at will.

"There is a point of rest
At the great centre of the cyclone's force,
A silence at its secret source ;
A little child might slumber undistressed,
Without the ruffle of one fairy curl,
In that strange central calm amid the mighty whirl.

"So in the centre of these thoughts of God,
Cyclones of power, consuming glory-fire—
As we fall o'erawed
Upon our faces, and are lifted nigher
By His great gentleness, and carried higher
Than unredeemèd angels, till we stand
Even in the hollow of His hand.
Nay, more ! we lean upon His breast—
There, there we find a point of perfect rest
And glorious safety. There we see
His thoughts to usward, thoughts of peace
That stoop in tenderest love, that still increase
With increase of our need, that never change,
That never fail or falter or forget.
O pity infinite !
O royal mercy free !

O gentle climax of the depth and height
Of God's most precious thoughts, most wonderful, most strange!
'For I am poor and needy, yet
The Lord Himself, Jehovah, *thinketh upon me!*'"

Frances Havergal's writings, prose, poetical and hymnal, have been described as "a body of divinity." They may well be so, for they portray innumerable phases of the Christian life. Her prose writings are not numerous, but are well known; some of them are for children, and are very attractively written. She seemed to understand the difficulties and sorrows of the little ones through her own vivid remembrances of her rather lonely child-life. Lonely because, like many children of intense feelings, she could seldom tell them to any human friend. Her description of her feelings on the death of her mother is most touching. It recalls to us the desolation of the poet Cowper expressed in his immortal poem, "My Mother's Picture."

The way in which she wrote must not be overlooked. In the life of "full surrender" she felt it to be her privilege to receive power and direction in the *words* she used. In writing, as well as speaking, she accepted a wide application of the command and the assurance, "Take no thought *beforehand* what ye shall speak: . . . but whatsoever shall be given you . . . that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak." Near the end of her life she said, "I can only ask *the Lord* to give me words; I am only *learning* myself day by day." This was the secret of her power in conversation, as well as in writing. We cannot do better than describe the process through which her poems were prepared, in her own words. She thus gives the explanation to a friend who had pressed her to write a poem on a given subject: "I can't make you quite understand me! You say, 'F. R. H. could do

"Satisfied" grandly!' *No*, she couldn't! Not unless He gave it me line by line! That is how verses come. The Master has not put a chest of poetic gold into my possession and said, 'Now use it as you like!' But He keeps the gold, and gives it me piece by piece just when He will, and as much as He will, and no more. Some day perhaps He will send me a bright *line* of verse on 'Satisfied' ringing through my mind; . . . perhaps He will send it all in one flow of musical thoughts, but more likely one at a time, that I may be kept asking Him for every line. I often smile to myself when people talk about 'gifted pen' or 'clever verses,' etc., because they don't know that it is neither, but something really much nicer than being talented or clever."

We will give an extract referring to her "Consecration Hymn," which has been so extensively accepted as the expression of hearts won to utter surrender by their Saviour's love. She writes:—

"Perhaps you will be interested to know the origin of the consecration hymn, 'Take my life.' I went for a little visit of five days. There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted, but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, 'Lord, give me *all* in this house!' And He just *did!* Before I left the house every one had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration, and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another, till they finished with, '*Ever*, ONLY, ALL for Thee!'"

One more passage refers to one of her prose books, "My King." Her sister writes:—

"I well remember when Frances first thought of writ-

ing 'My King.' We were returning from Switzerland. Her illness there had quite hindered any writing, and she seemed to regret having no book ready for Christmas. It was October 21st; we had passed Oxford station on our way to Winterdyne, and I thought she was dozing, when she exclaimed, with that herald flash in her eye, 'Marie! I see it all: I can write a little book, "My King"'; and rapidly went through divisions for thirty-one chapters. The setting sun shone on her face; and, even then, it seemed to me she could not be far distant from the land of the King. Illness came on again, accompanied by severe suffering, yet the book was quickly written and published. We may regard the pages in 'My King' as the fruit of her patiently taking back 'the turned lesson,' which prevented her writing for so many months."

In glancing back over the life of Frances Havergal it is important to recall the fact that the overcoming grace and the power for service which were given her followed the exercise of faith and watching and prayer. Step by step she was led on, accepting with joy each new manifestation of her Father's will. Seeking to do that will, she was brought to "know of the doctrine," and when the Light illumined a truth she accepted it and lived it. Thus walking moment by moment in the sunshine of the Lord's presence, her path became as a shining light, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

As the end approached many wondered at the ever-increasing "sweetness and power" of her words. The Master called His servant suddenly at the age of forty-two to lay aside her earthly work for Him; her final illness only lasted a few days. The suffering was intense; her joy and peace were commensurate with the physical anguish. The prospect of leaving her work in

the harvest field cost her no pang, for was she not called into the presence of the Lord of the harvest? In her daily life she had acted on the principle that there is no such thing as *interruption* to the Master's service, because He has the right to supersede one occupation by another at any moment. She now showed how absolute was her trust in the perfectness of His will.

As she was dying there came into her face a look of radiant, heavenly delight. Those around gazed in wonder. It seemed to them almost as if they saw her meeting with her Lord, her face was so full of expression, "as if she were already talking to Him."

After death the same marvellous light illumined her features till they were closed from mortal view, and the form lately so full of exuberant life and energy was laid in the quiet grave, to await the call, when they who sleep in Jesus and they who are living in Him shall meet Him at His coming, and shall "ever be with the Lord."

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